

EXHIBIT A



US006502917B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Shinada et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 6,502,917 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Jan. 7, 2003**

(54) **INK-JET PRINTING APPARATUS AND INK CARTRIDGE THEREFOR**

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(73) Assignee: **Seiko Epson Corporation**, Tokyo (JP)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/484,458**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 18, 2000**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. PCT/JP99/02579, filed on May 18, 1999.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

May 18, 1998	(JP)	10-151882
May 18, 1998	(JP)	10-151883
Jun. 26, 1998	(JP)	10-180519
Sep. 21, 1998	(JP)	10-266109
Oct. 23, 1998	(JP)	10-301782
Mar. 24, 1999	(JP)	11-078843

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **B41J 29/393; B41J 2/175**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **347/19; 347/86**
(58) **Field of Search** **347/19, 86, 14, 347/23, 108, 85, 50, 87, 49**

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Primary Examiner—John Barlow

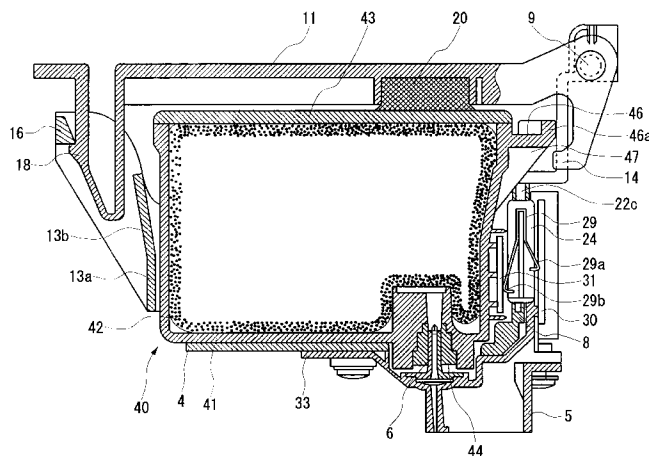
Assistant Examiner—Charles W. Stewart, Jr.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An ink jet type printing apparatus in which an ink supply needle is located near one side in a direction perpendicular to the reciprocated directions of a carriage, a circuit board is mounted on a wall of an ink cartridge in the vicinity of the side on which an ink supply port is formed and plural contacts for connecting to external control means are formed on the exposed surface of the circuit board.

38 Claims, 24 Drawing Sheets



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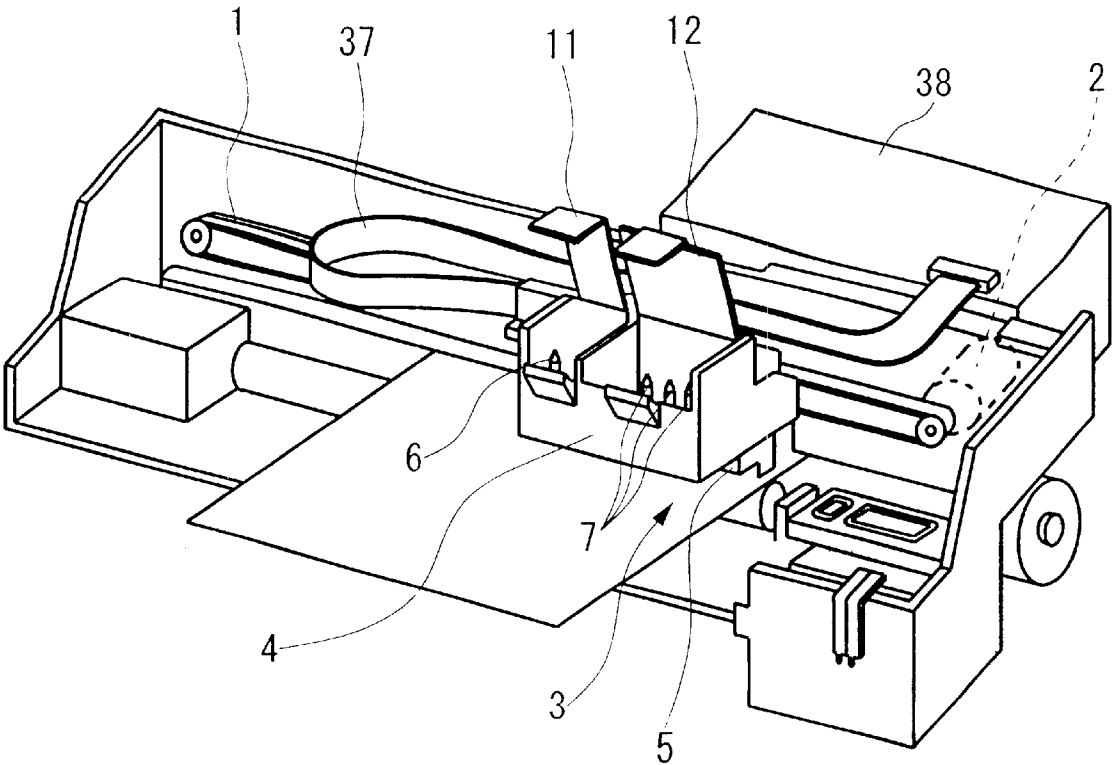


FIG. 1

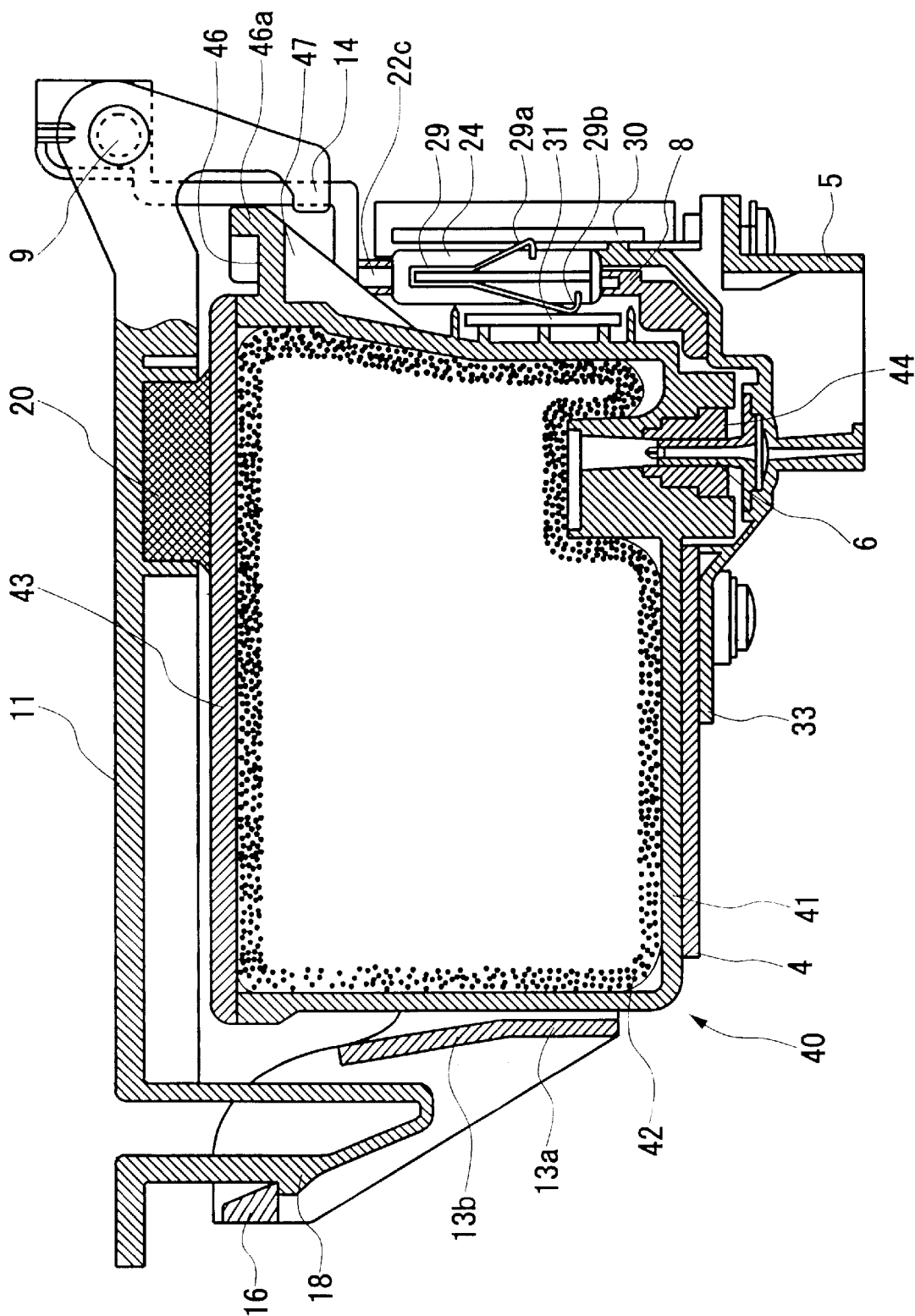


FIG. 3

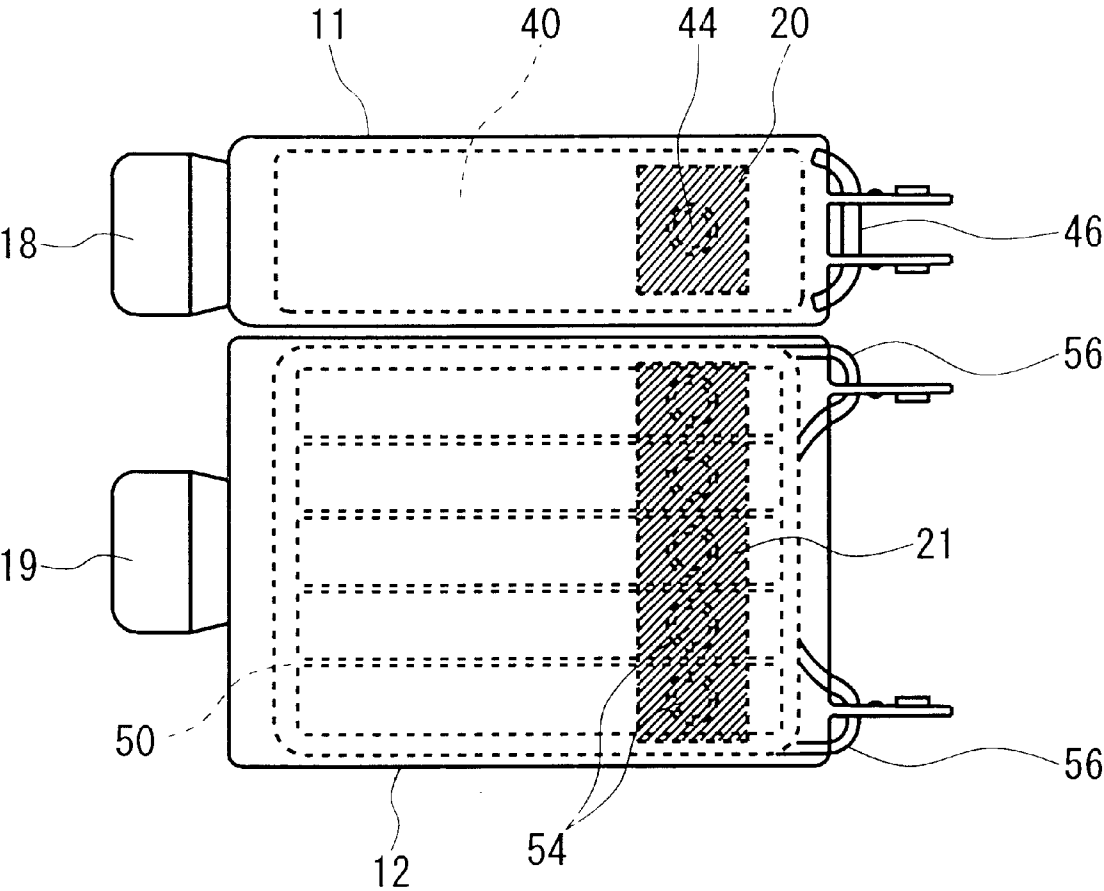
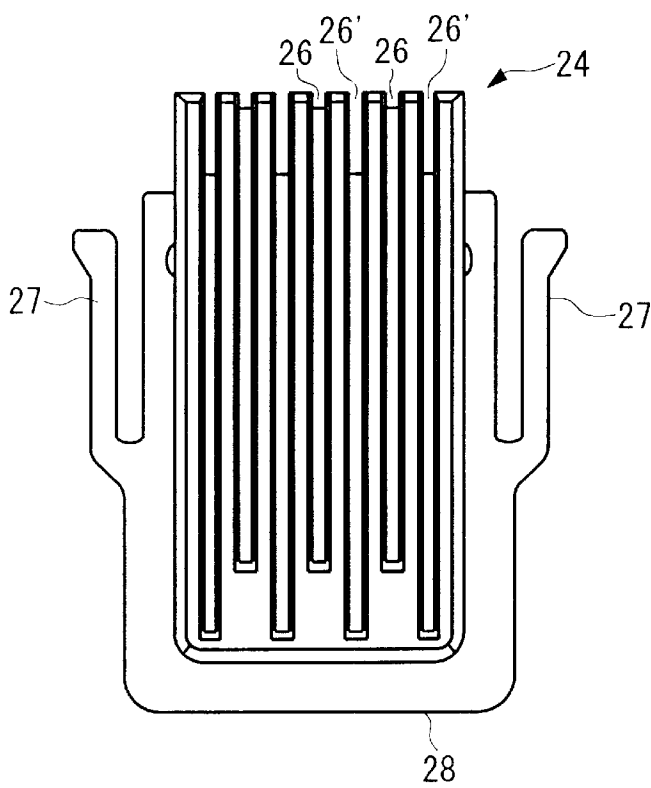
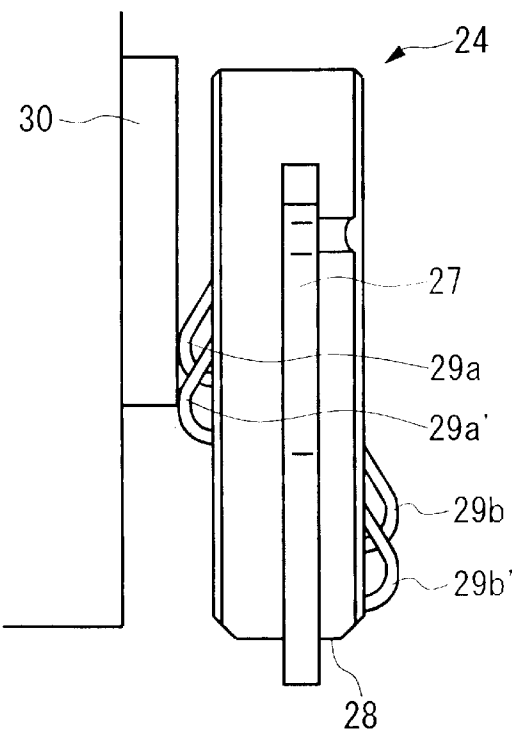


FIG. 4



(a)



(b)

FIG. 5

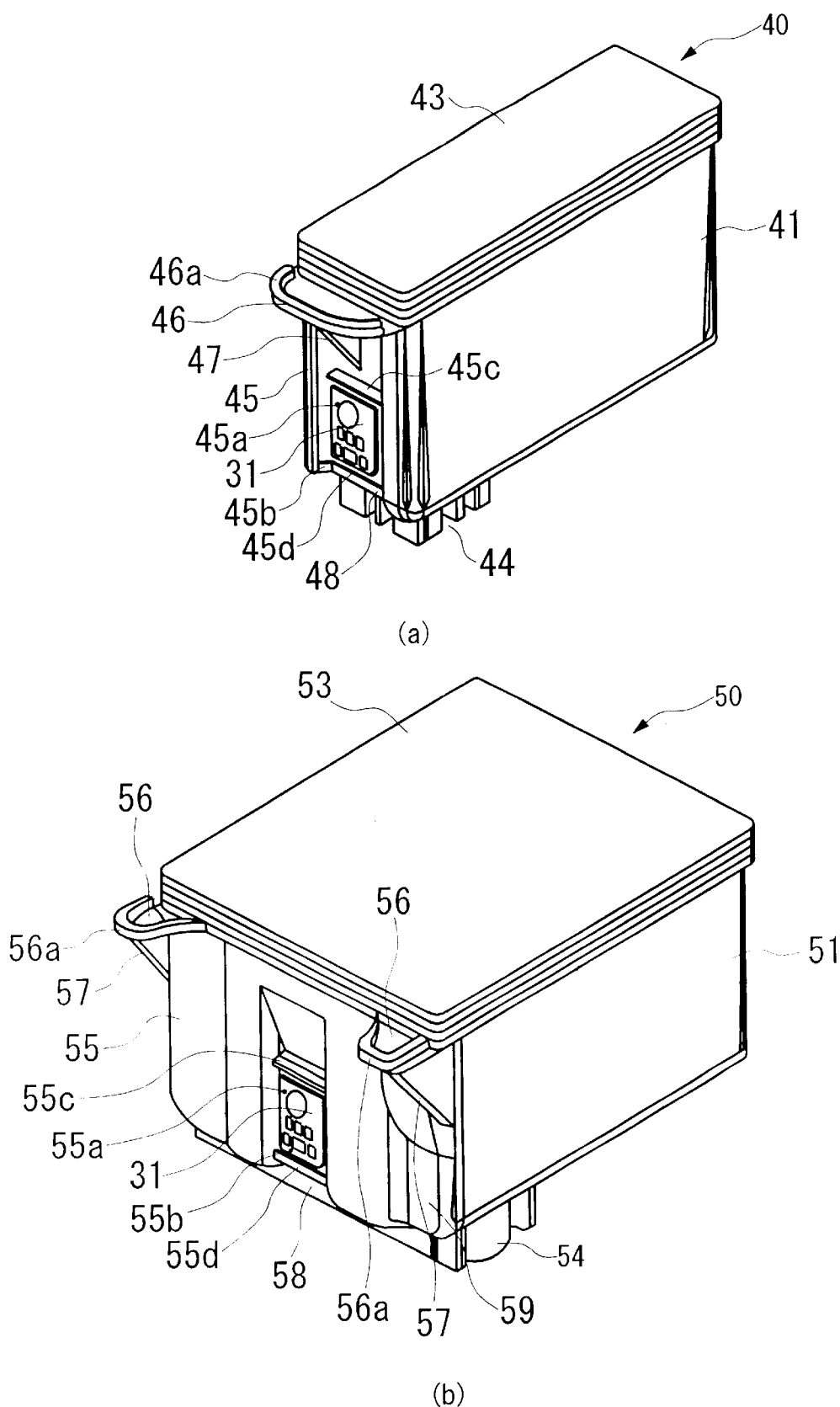


FIG. 6

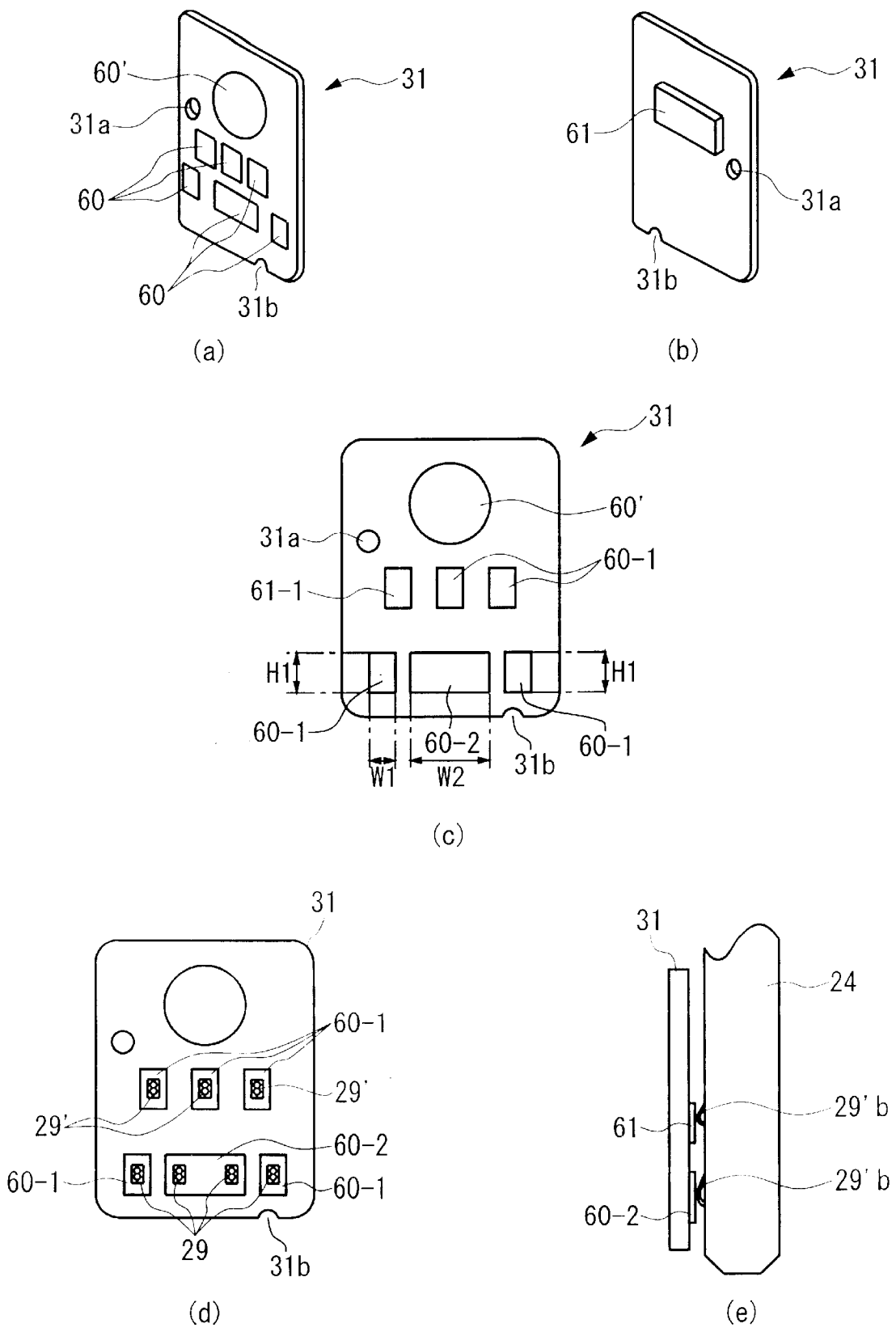


FIG. 7

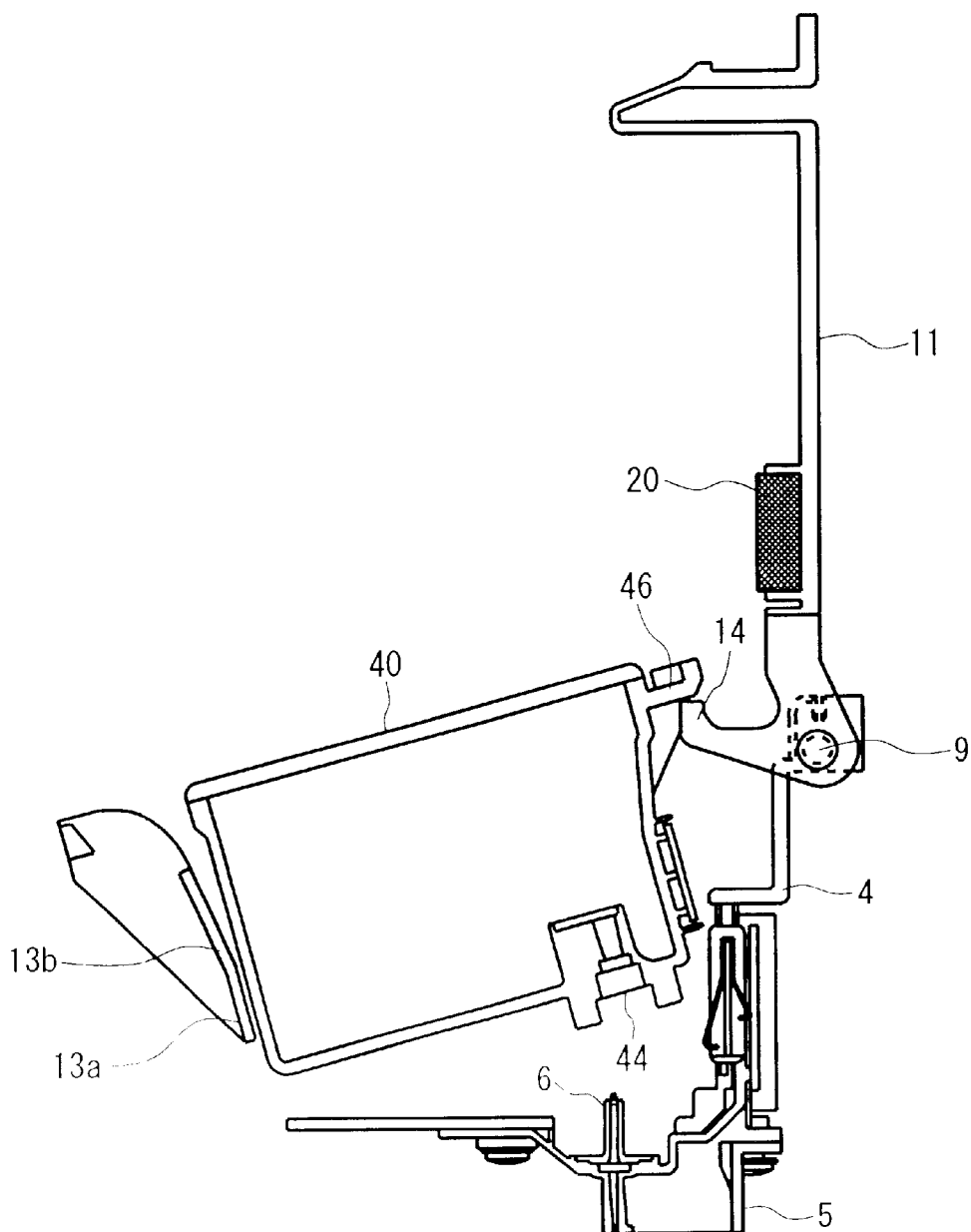


FIG. 8

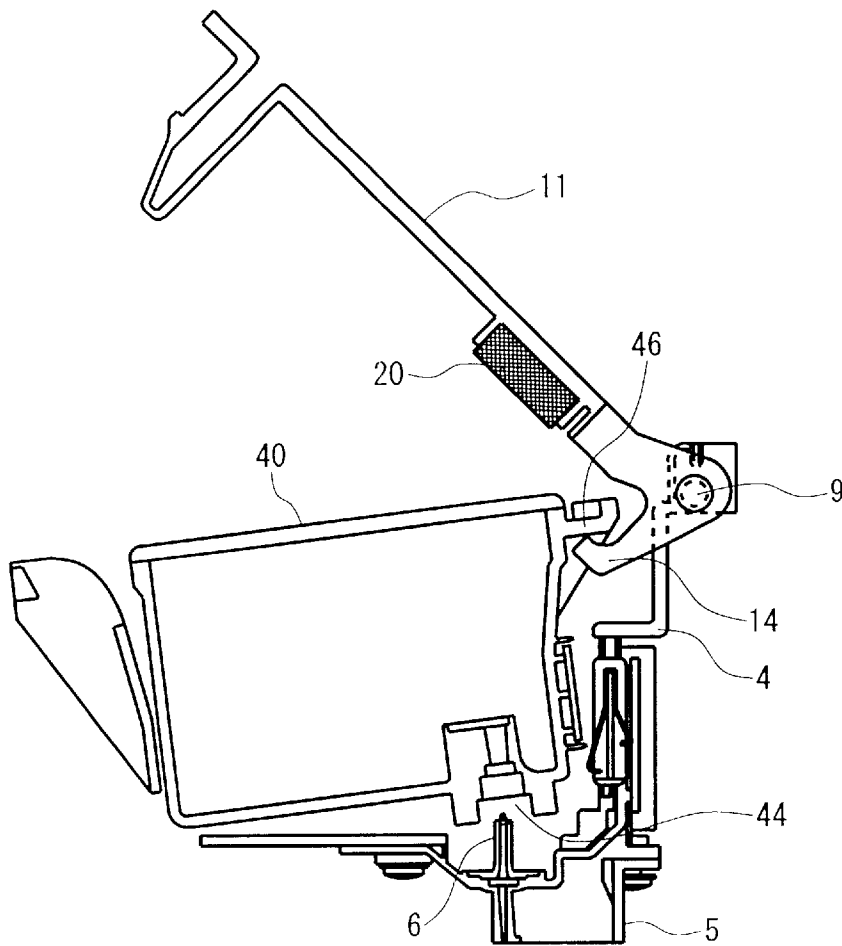


FIG. 9

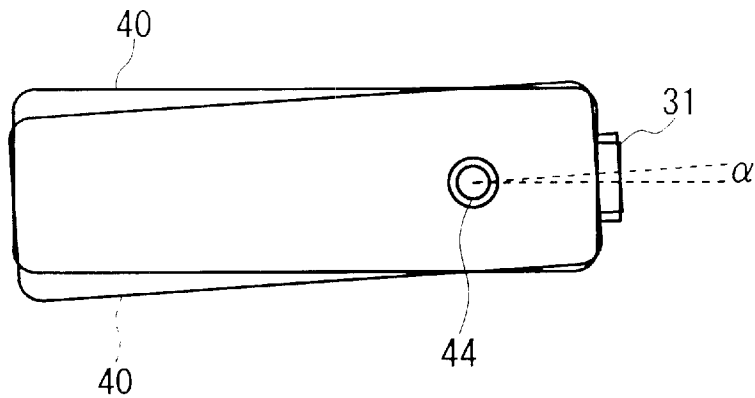


FIG. 10

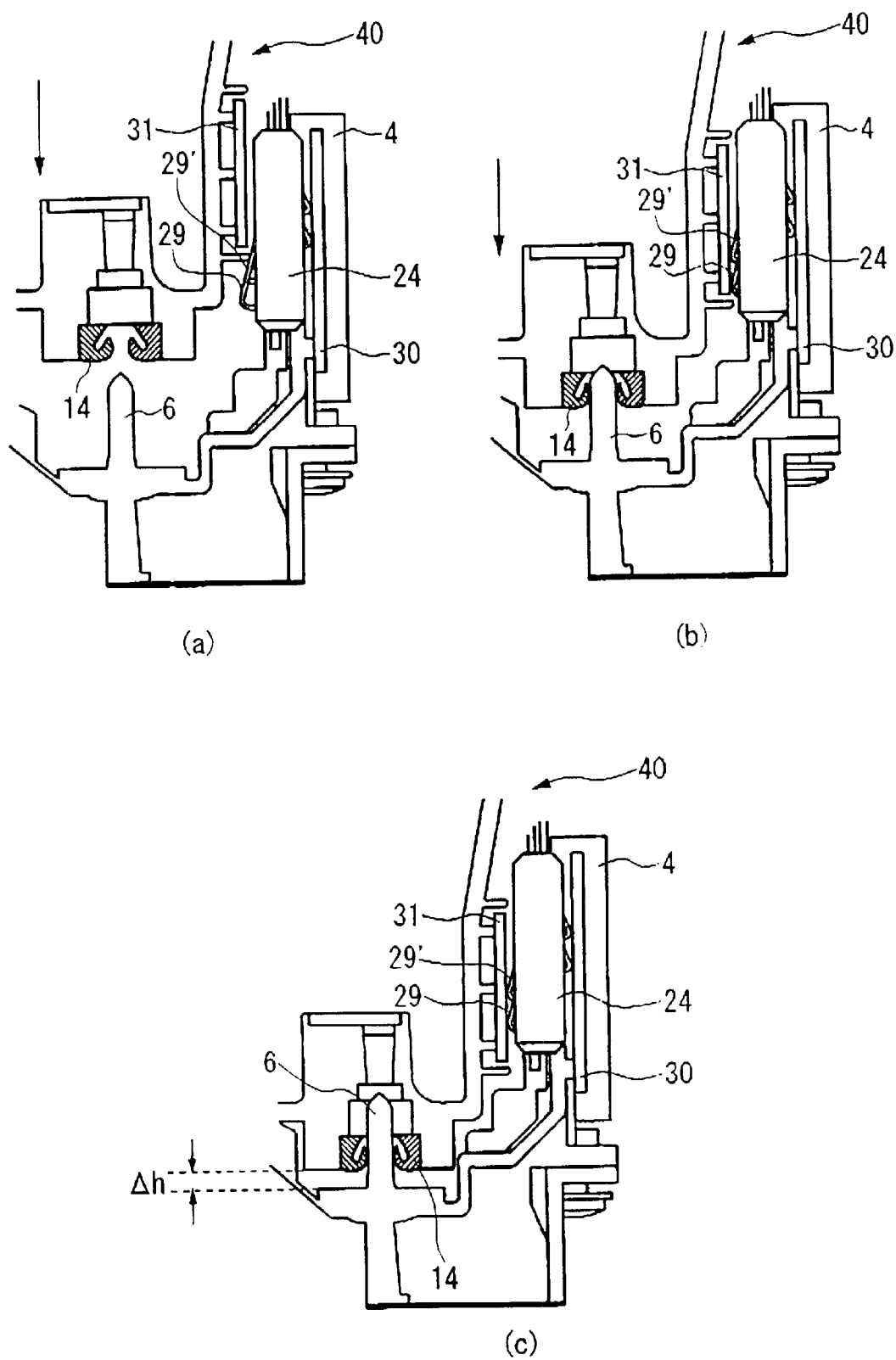


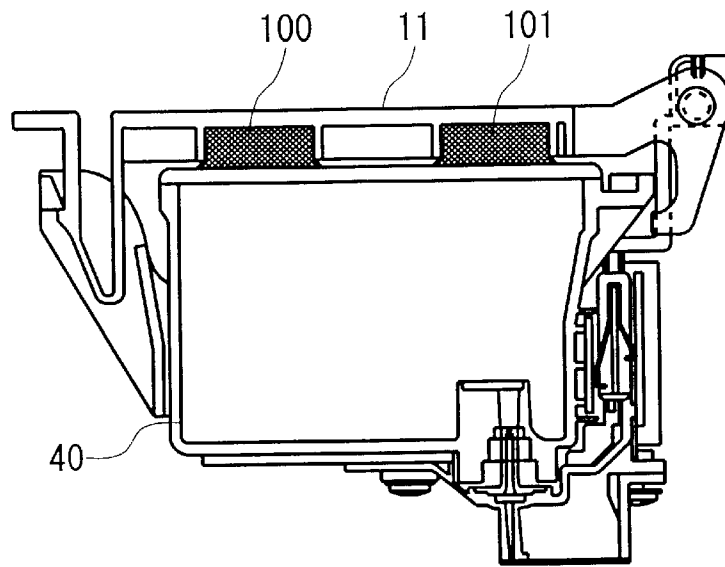
FIG. 11

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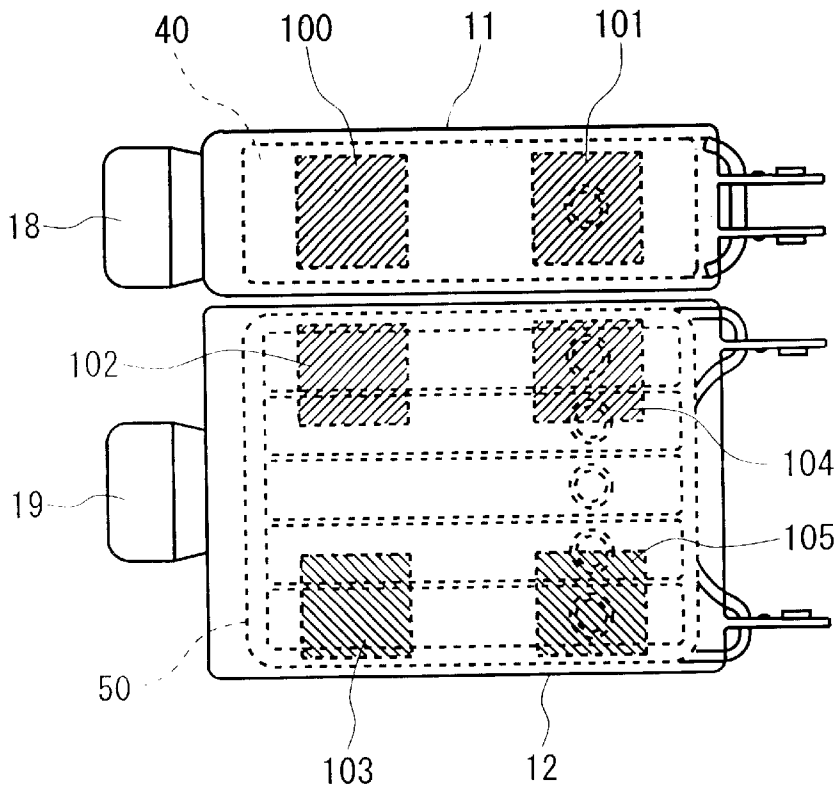
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(a)



(b)

FIG. 12

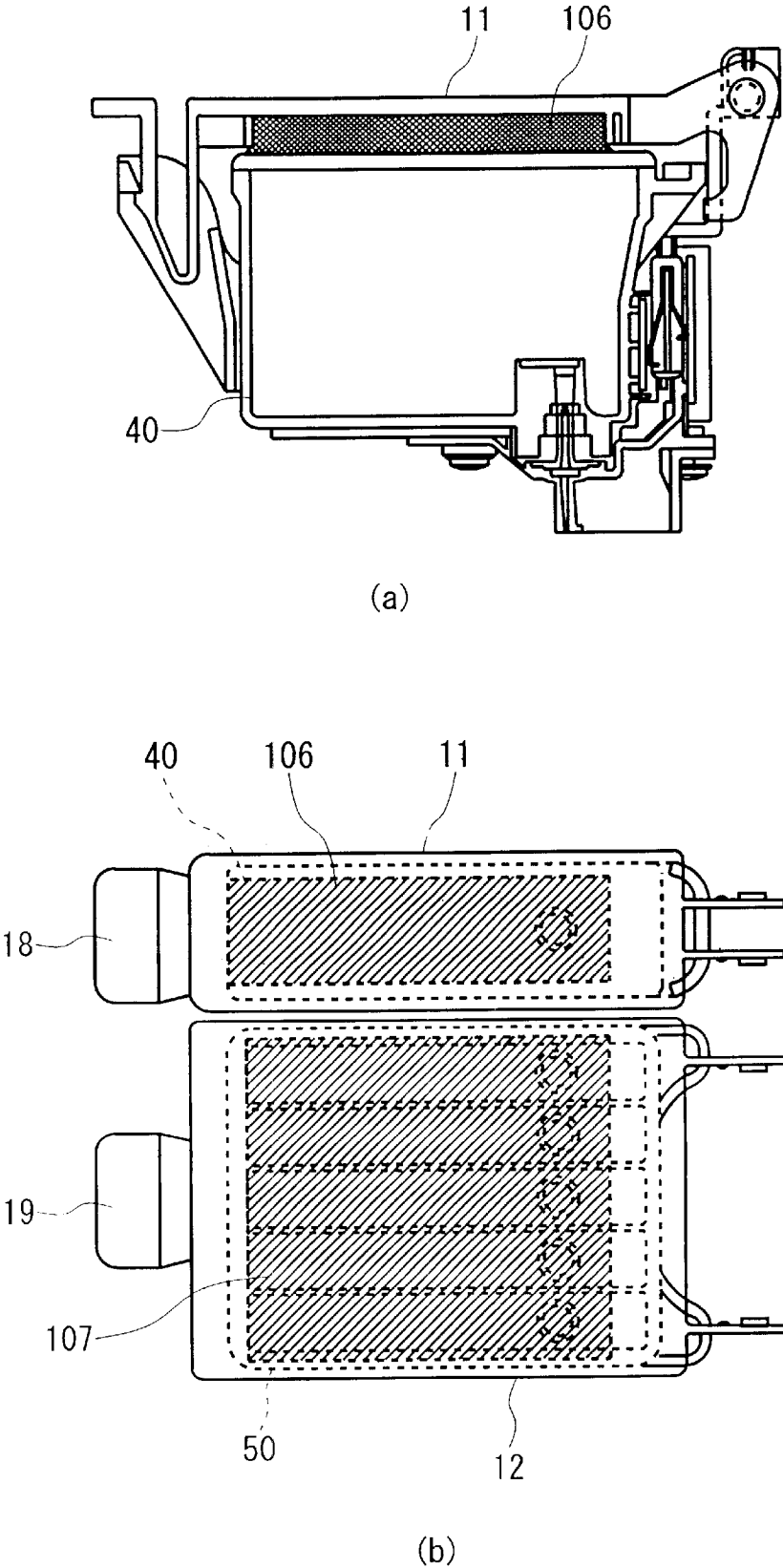
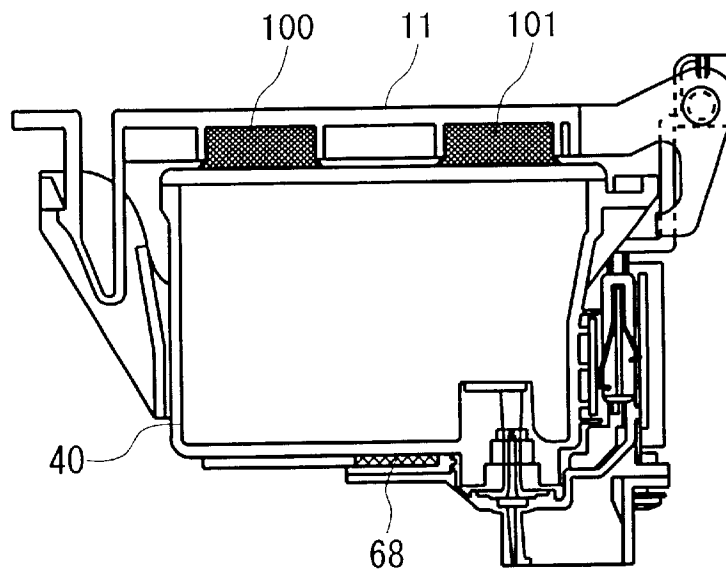
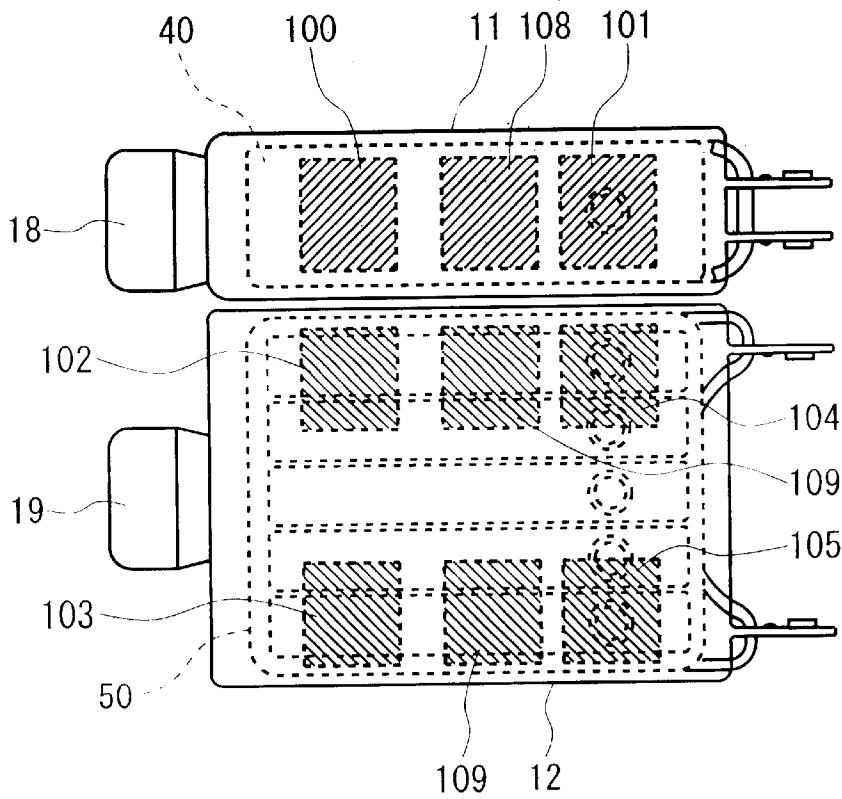


FIG. 13



(a)



(b)

FIG. 14

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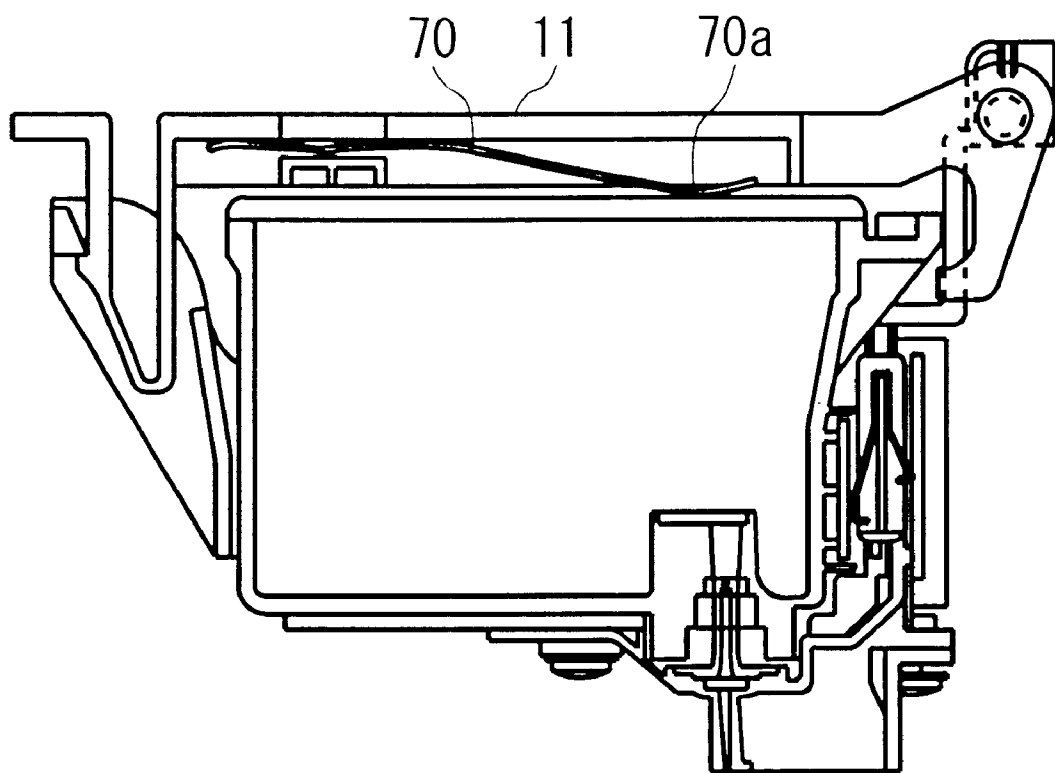


FIG. 15

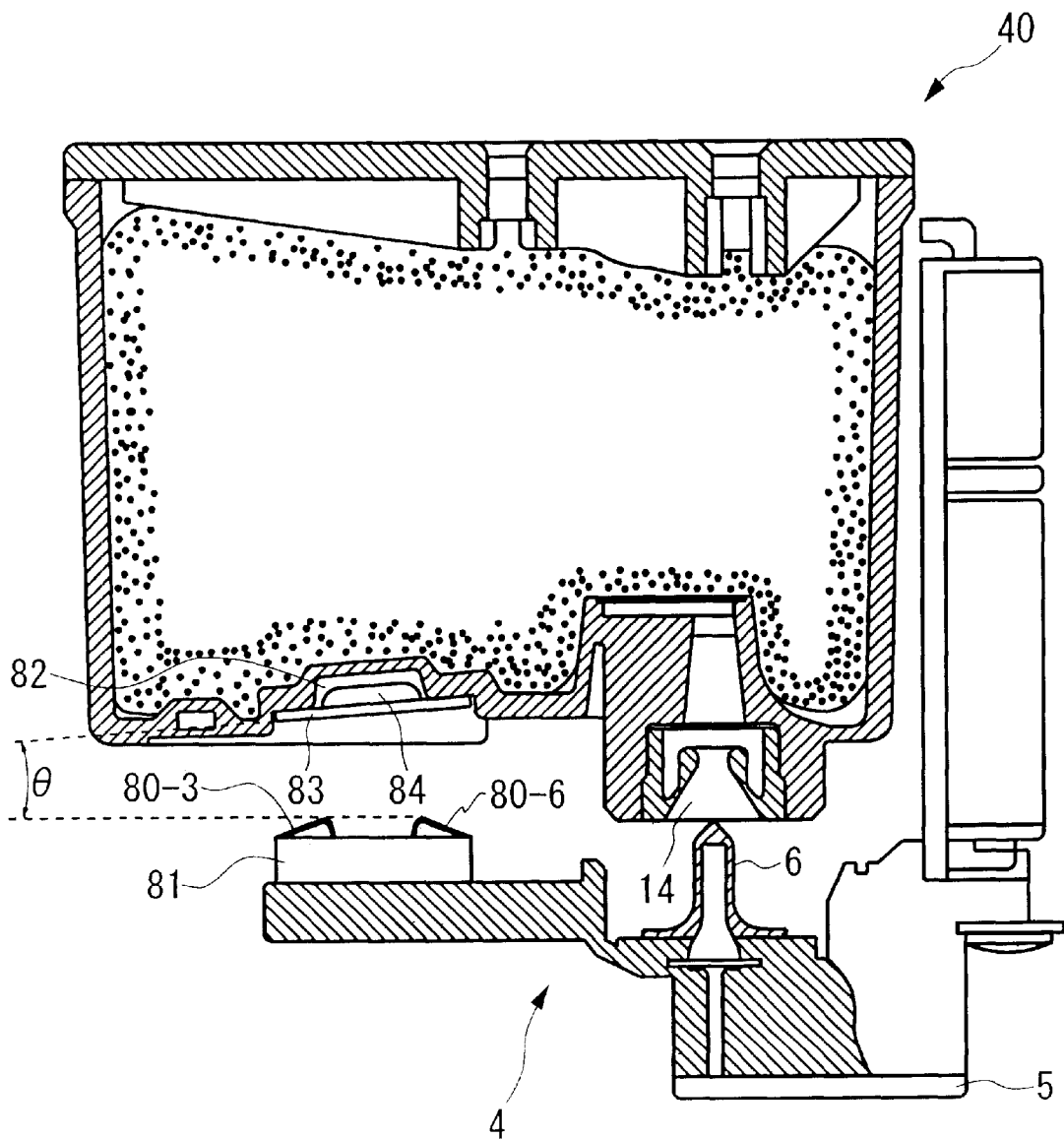
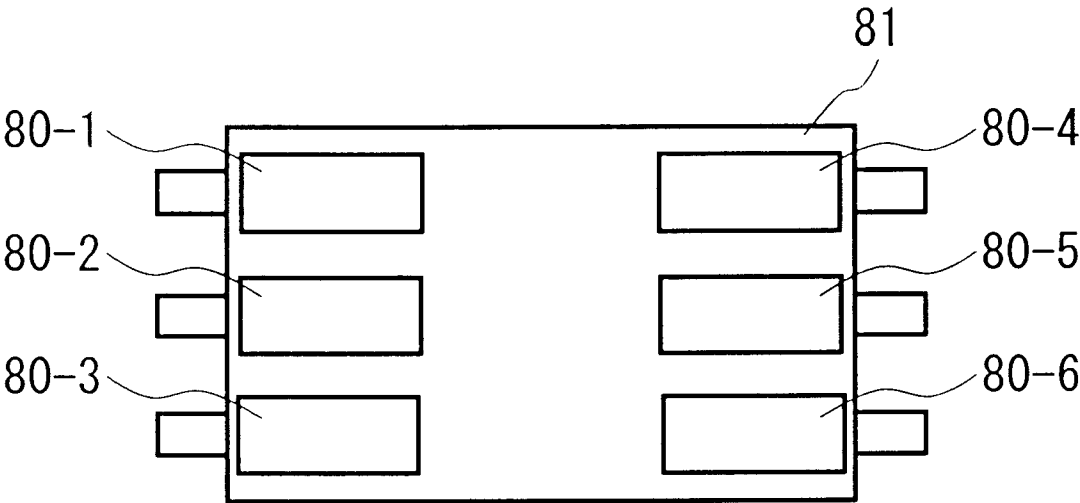
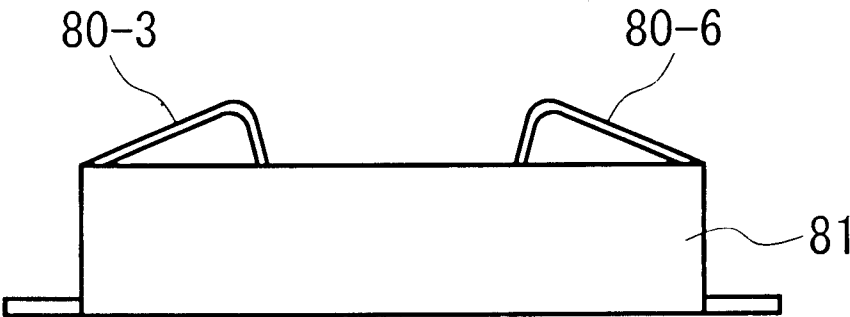


FIG. 16



(a)



(b)

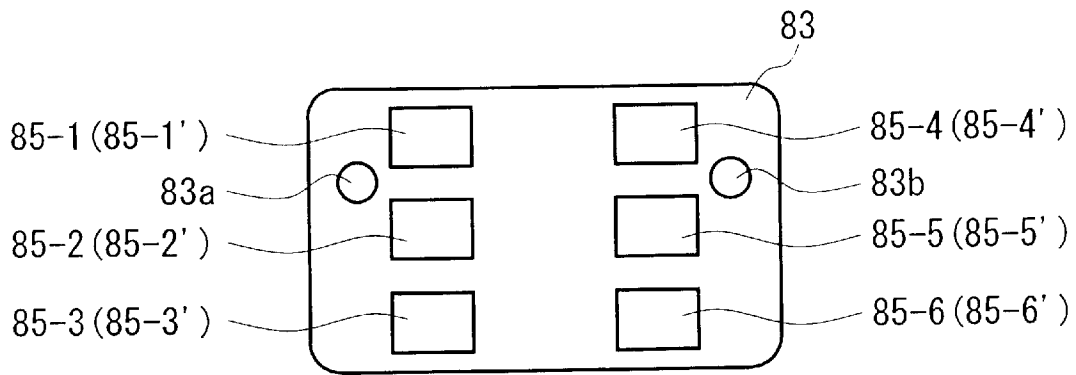
FIG. 17

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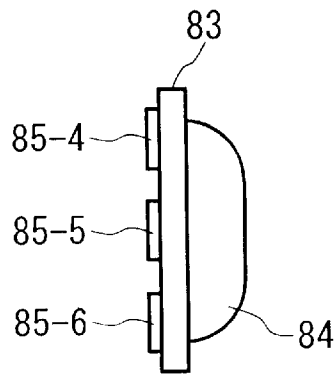
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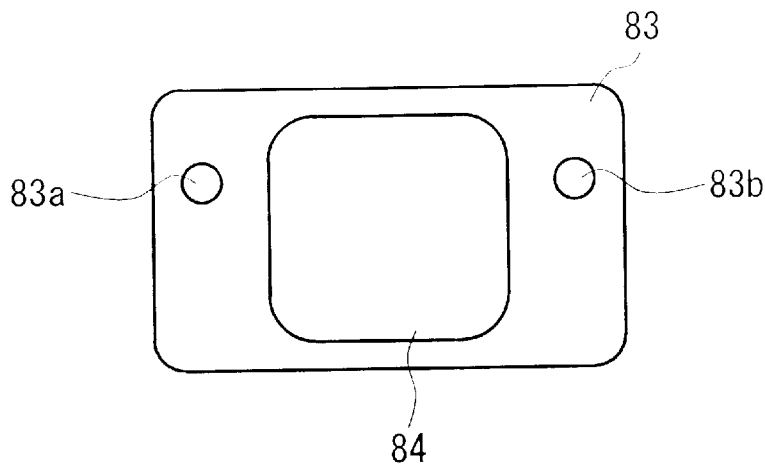
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(a)



(b)



(c)

FIG. 18

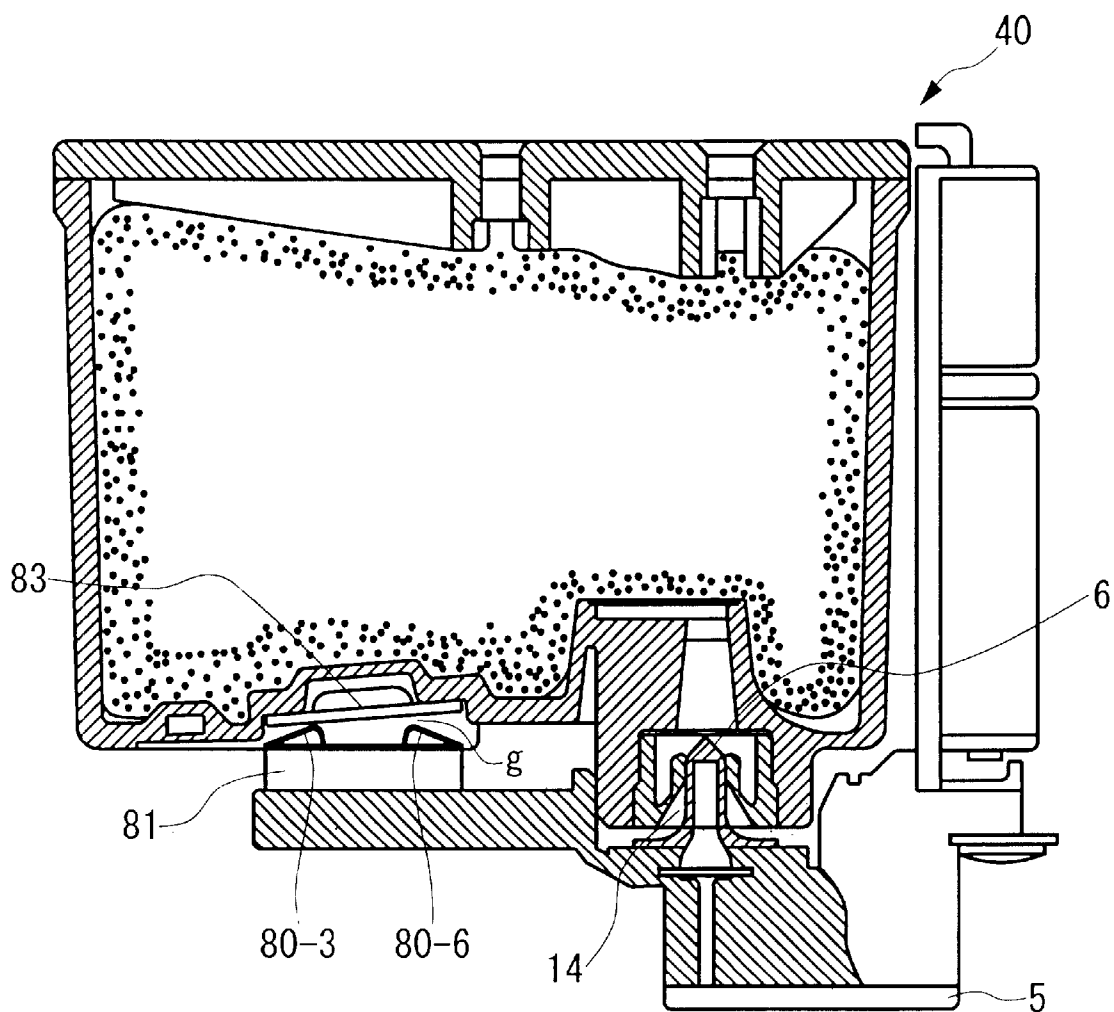


FIG. 19

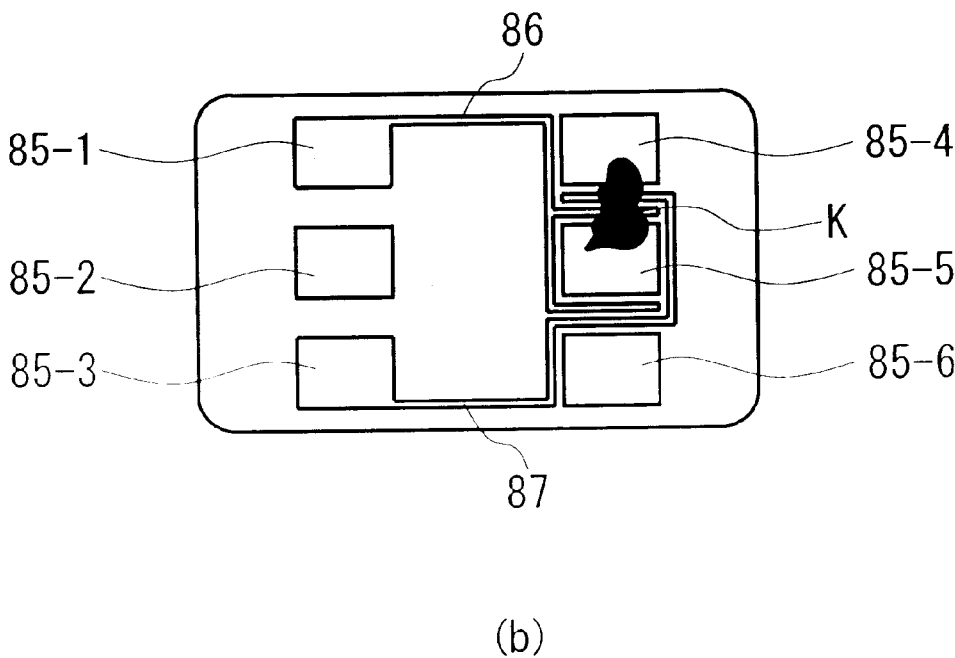
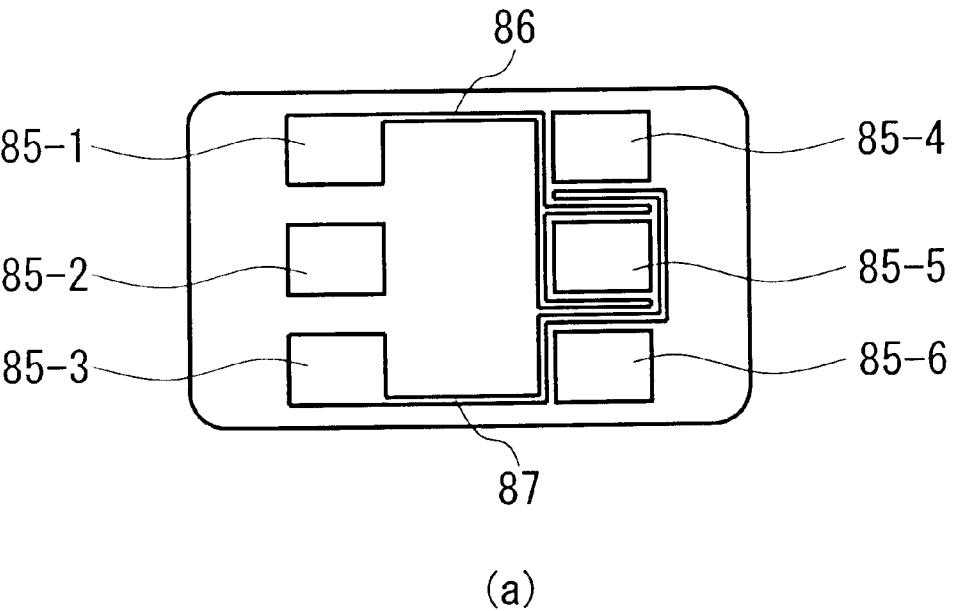


FIG. 20

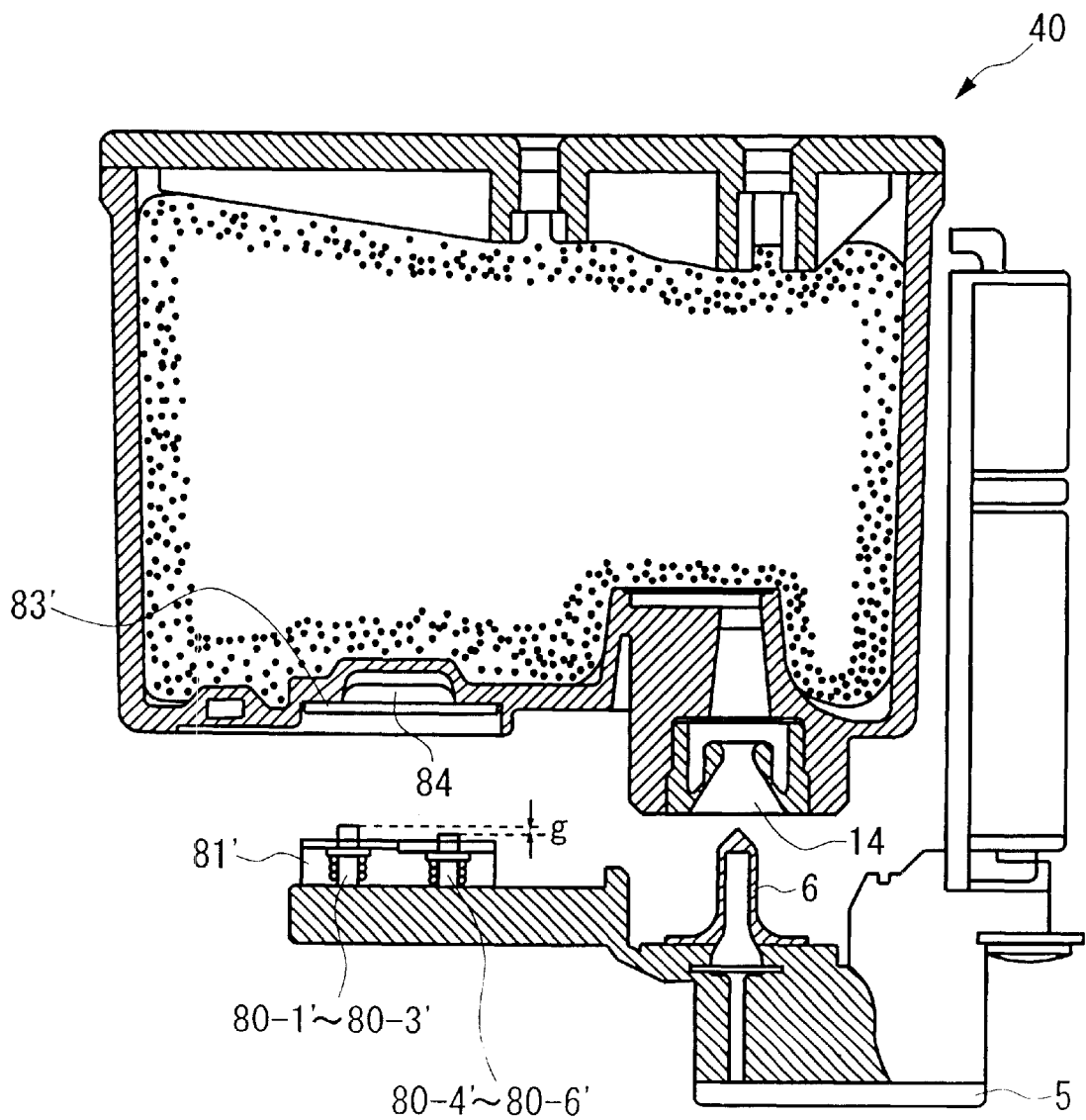


FIG. 21

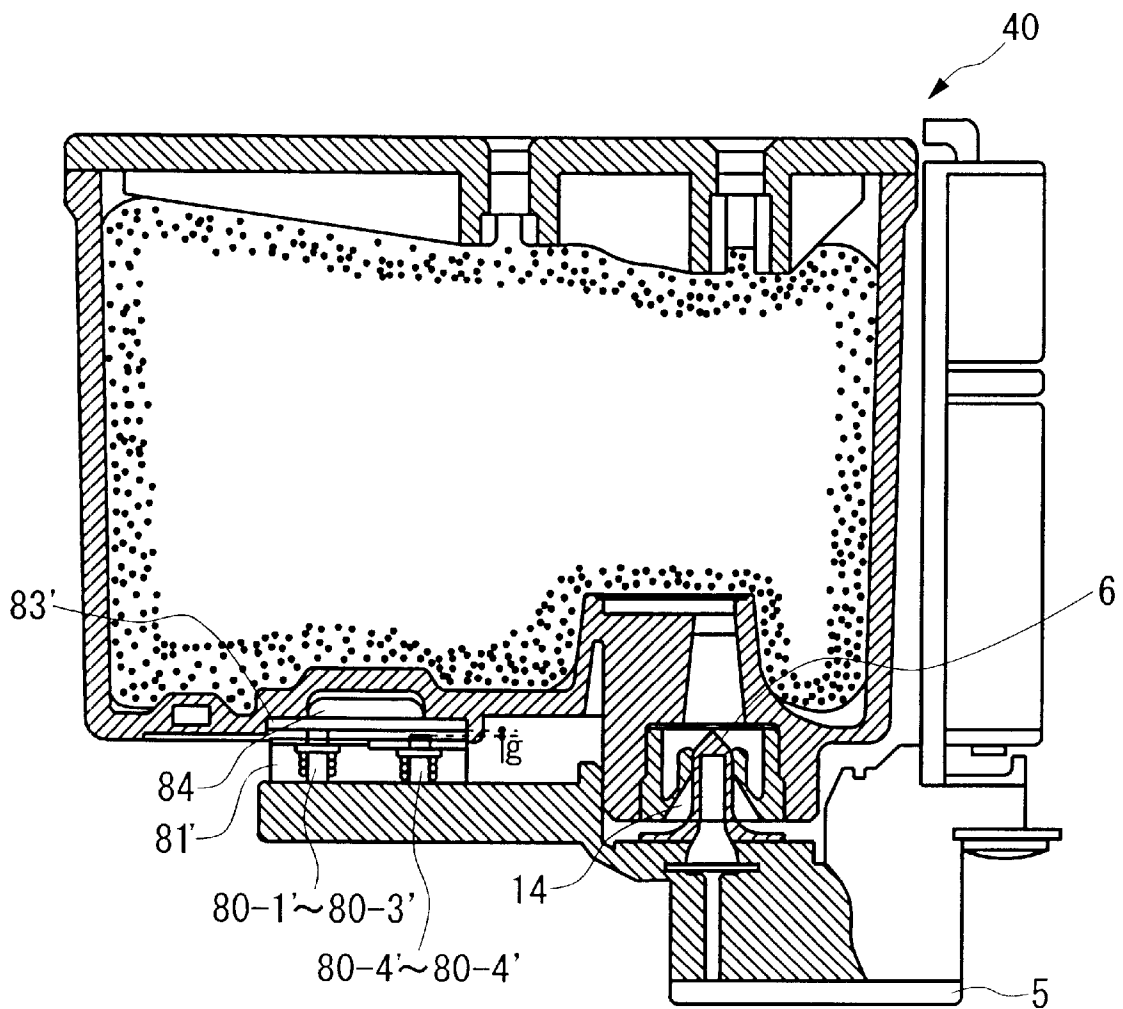
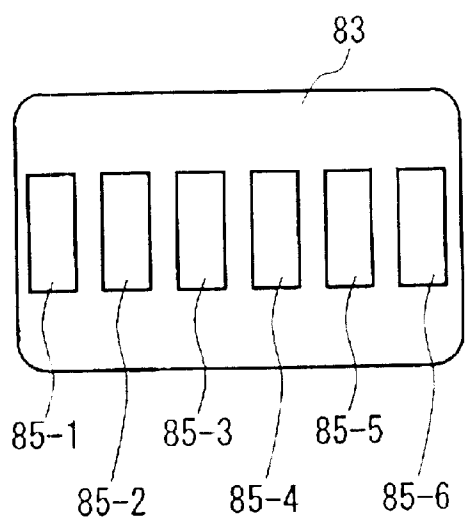
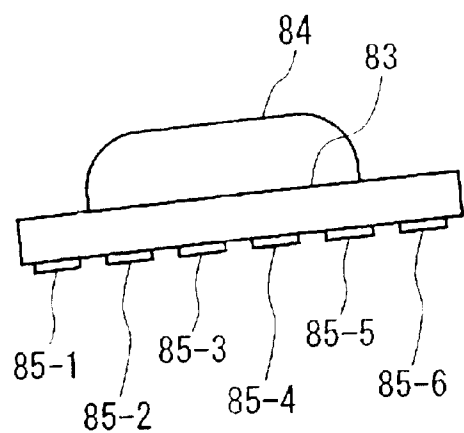


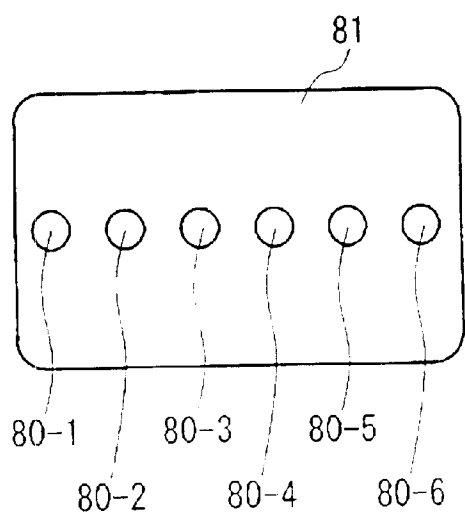
FIG. 22



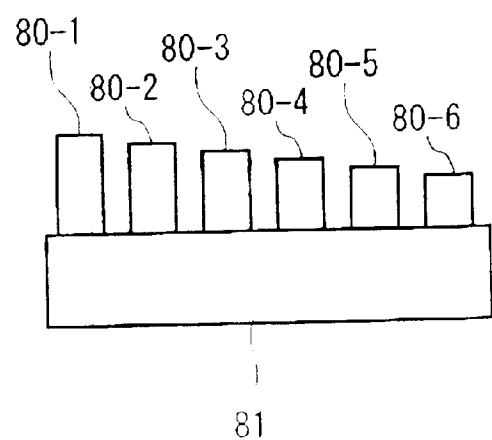
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

FIG. 23

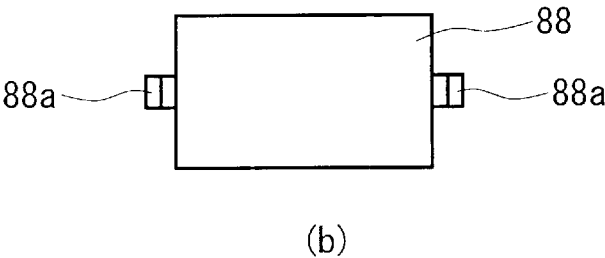
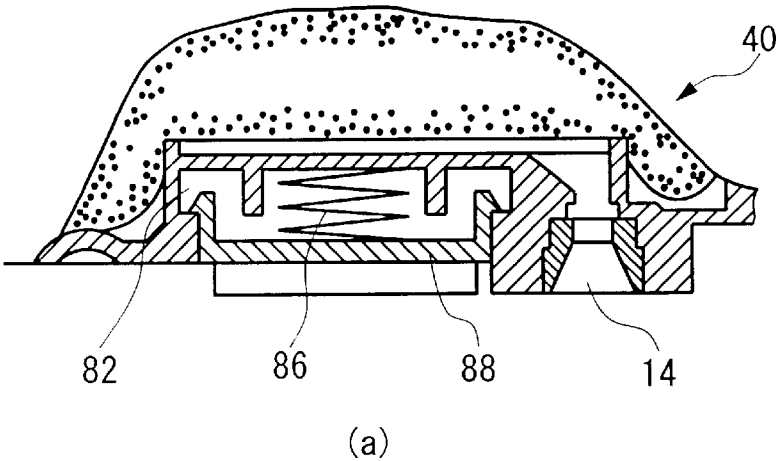


FIG. 24

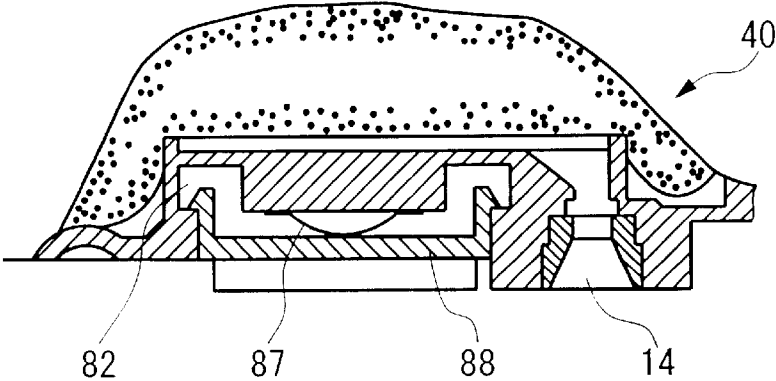
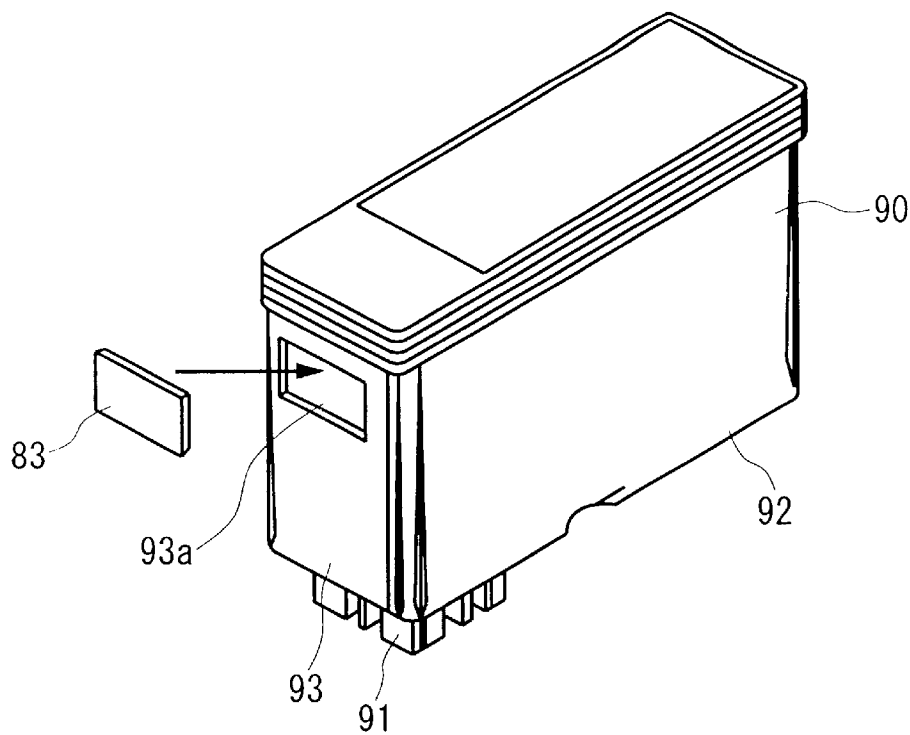
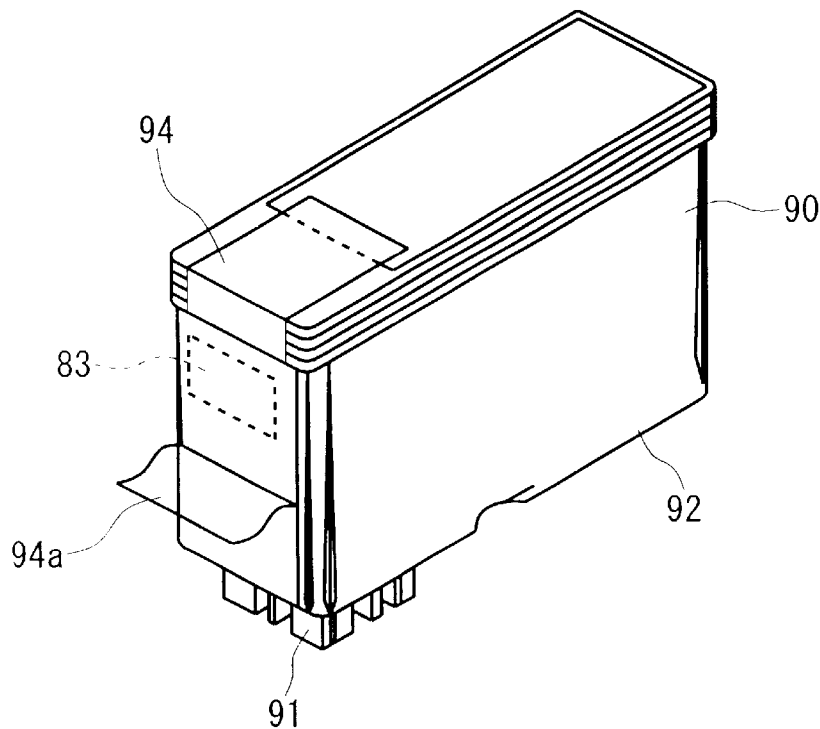


FIG. 25



(a)



(b)

FIG. 26

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**INK-JET PRINTING APPARATUS AND INK
CARTRIDGE THEREFOR****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This is a continuation-in-part of PCT Application No. PCT/JP99/02579, filed May 18, 1999, which claims benefit of priority based on Japanese and PCT Application Ser. 10-151883, filed May 18, 1998, 10-151882, filed May 18, 1998, 10-180519, filed Jun. 26, 1998, 10-266109, filed Sep. 21, 1998, 10-301782, filed Oct. 23, 1998, and 11-78843, filed Mar. 24, 1999.

This is a Continuation-in-Part of PCT Application No. PCT/JP99/02579, filed May 18, 1999, which claims benefit of priority based on Japanese and PCT Application No. 10-151883, filed May 18, 1998, 10-151882, filed May 18, 1998, 10-180519, Jun. 26, 1998, 10-266109, Sep. 21, 1998, 10-301782, Oct. 23, 1998, 11-78843, Mar. 24, 1999.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**1. Field of the Invention:**

The present invention relates to a printing apparatus to which ink is supplied from a replaceable ink cartridge for printing on a recording medium, ejecting an ink droplet from nozzle apertures and an ink cartridge suitable for the above printing apparatus.

2. Conventional Art

An ink-jet printing apparatus is known in which there is provided with a print head for supplying a driving signal to a piezoelectric vibrator or heating means to print data, pressurizing ink by energy generated by the piezoelectric vibrator or the heating means and thereby ejecting ink droplets from nozzle apertures and an ink cartridge housing ink for supplying ink to the above print head.

As the print quality depends upon the resolution of the print head and greatly depends upon the viscosity of ink, the degree of bleeding on a recording medium or the like, the characteristics of ink are improved to enhance the print quality. Even if the same ink is used, a driving method of a print head suitable for the characteristics of ink is improved to enhance the print quality. Further, a maintenance condition such as the cycle of no-medium-ejection or forced ejection in a capping state is improved to prevent the nozzle apertures from clogging.

As described above, the print quality of a printing apparatus can be enhanced when the ink characteristics and the driving method for a print head work together, not only by the ink characteristics. Although a result by such technical development can be applied to a newly manufactured ink-jet printing apparatus, the application to a printing apparatus already shipped from a manufacturer would be practically impossible when taking into consideration the cost, labor and others. This is because that the printing apparatus has to be carried to the manufacturer and storing means in which control data is recorded must be exchanged.

To cope with such a problem, as disclosed in Japanese Patent Publication No. 2594912 for example, there has been proposed a printing apparatus in which semiconductor storage means and an electrode connecting to the storage means are arranged on an ink cartridge, a group of electrodes is also arranged on the body of the printing apparatus, data stored in the semiconductor storage means is read, and recording operation is controlled in accordance with the data.

However, there is a problem that contact with the semiconductor storage means is failed because of rough opera-

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tion for attaching or detaching an ink cartridge by a user or play between a carriage and an ink cartridge, the reading of data is disabled because of electrification or the application of a signal at unsuitable timing and, in the worst case, data is lost and recording operation is disabled.

The present invention is made in view of such a problem and an object of which is to provide an ink-jet printing apparatus wherein data stored in semiconductor storage means can be prevented from being lost independent of unsuitable operation for attaching or detaching an ink cartridge.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an ink cartridge suitable for the above printing apparatus.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of a printing apparatus according to the present invention mainly in relation to its recording mechanism, and

FIG. 2 is an assembly perspective drawing showing an embodiment of a carriage in the above printing apparatus.

FIG. 3 shows an embodiment of the carriage in the above printing apparatus in a state in which an ink cartridge is installed,

FIG. 4 is a top view showing an embodiment of the carriage in the above printing apparatus in a state in which an ink cartridge is installed, and

FIGS. 5(a) and 5(b) show an embodiment of a contact mechanism of the above carriage.

FIGS. 6(a) and 6(b) show an embodiment of an ink cartridge suitable for the above printing apparatus,

FIGS. 7(a) to 7(c) show an embodiment of a circuit board mounted on the ink cartridge in relation to its superficial and rear structure and the size of an electrode and

FIGS. 7(d) and 7(e) show a state of contact with a contact,

FIGS. 8 and 9 show a process in which the above ink cartridge is installed,

FIG. 10 shows the quantity of the movement of mainly an ink supply port where an ink supply needle is inserted of the ink cartridge, and

FIGS. 11(a) to 11(c) show a process of contact between the circuit board of the ink cartridge and a contact of a holder.

FIGS. 12(a), 12(b) to FIGS. 14(a) and 14(b) are respectively sectional views and top views showing another embodiment of the present invention in a state in which the ink cartridge is installed, and

FIG. 15 is a sectional view showing another embodiment of the present invention in a state in which the ink cartridge is installed.

FIG. 16 is a sectional view showing another embodiment of the head holder and the ink cartridge respectively in the above printing apparatus,

FIGS. 17(a) and 17(b) are respectively a plan and a side view showing an embodiment of the contact provided to the above head holder, and

FIGS. 18(a) to 18(c) are respectively a front view, a side view and a rear view showing a contact board mounted on the above ink cartridge.

FIG. 19 is a sectional view showing first conduction in a process for inserting the ink cartridge, and

FIG. 20(a) is a plan showing the other embodiment of the contact mounted on the above ink cartridge and FIG. 20(b) shows a state in which ink adheres.

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FIG. 21 is a sectional view showing the other embodiment of the head holder and the ink cartridge respectively in the printing apparatus according to the present invention, and

FIG. 22 is a sectional view showing first conduction in the process for inserting the ink cartridge in the above printing apparatus.

FIGS. 23(a) to 23(d) are respectively plans and side views showing the other embodiment of the present invention in relation to the arrangement of the contacts, and

FIGS. 24(a) and 24(b) are respectively sectional views showing another embodiment of the mounting of the circuit board on the ink cartridge and a top view showing the structure of a mounting plate.

FIG. 25 is a sectional view showing another embodiment of the mounting of the circuit board on the ink cartridge.

FIGS. 26(a) and 26(b) show the other embodiment of the mounting of the circuit board.

THE BEST MODE FOR EMBODYING THE PRESENT INVENTION

FIG. 1 shows one embodiment of an ink-jet printing apparatus according to the present invention with respect to a printing mechanism. A holder 4 for installing a black ink cartridge 40 housing black ink described later and a color ink cartridge 50 housing color ink is disposed on an upper surface of a carriage 3 connecting to a driving motor 2 via a timing belt 1. A print head 5 to which ink is supplied from each ink cartridge is provided on the lower surface of the carriage 3.

FIG. 2 shows an embodiment of the carriage in a state in which the carriage is disassembled into a holder part and a head part and FIG. 3 is a sectional structural view sectioned at an ink supply port 44 of the black ink cartridge 40.

Ink supply needles 6 and 7 communicating with the print head 5 are vertically penetrated in the bottom of the carriage 3 so that they are located on the back side of the device, that is, on the side of the timing belt 1. Levers 11 and 12 are respectively mounted at the upper end of a vertical wall 8 opposite to each vicinity of the ink supply needles 6 and 7 out of the vertical wall forming the holder 4 so that the levers are respectively rotatable along shafts 9 and 10. A wall 13 located on the side of each free end of the levers 11 and 12 is composed of a vertical part 13a near the bottom and a sloped part 13b sloped outward in its upper area.

The levers 11 and 12 respectively extend from the vicinity of the shafts 9 and 10 so that projections 14 and 15 respectively fitted to overhangs 46 and 56 described later at the upper end of the ink cartridges 40 and 50 are approximately perpendicular to each body of the respective levers 11 and 12, and hook portions 18 and 19 elastically fitted to hooks 16 and 17 formed in the sloped part 13b of the holder 4 are respectively formed.

Elastic members 20 and 21 for elastically pressing at least the area opposite to the ink supply port 44 or 54 of each ink cartridge 40 or 50, as shown in FIG. 4, when the ink cartridge 40 is set in a normal position are provided to the back of each lever 11 or 12, that is, the face opposite to a cover 43 of the ink cartridge 40.

For these elastic members 20 and 21, material having the coefficient of friction of 0.5 or more for the respective covers 43 and 53 of the ink cartridges 40 and 50, for example, rubber the hardness of which is 10° to 70°, foamed material and a felt member and, further, gelled material are employed.

Windows 22 and 23 each upper part of which is open are respectively formed on the vertical wall 8 located near the

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ink supply needle. Further, continuous grooves 22c and 23c are respectively formed on vertical walls 22a and 23a and at the bottoms 22b and 23b to respectively form each window, and contact mechanisms 24 and 25 are respectively inserted into these grooves 22c and 23c and fixed therein.

As the contact mechanisms 24 and 25 are composed so that they have approximately the same structure, one contact mechanism 24 will be described below. As shown in FIGS. 5(a) and 5(b), two types of slits 26 and 26' different in depth are formed approximately at fixed pitch, the contact forming members 29 and 29' provided with conductivity and elasticity are fitted into each slit 26 or 26' of the body 28 provided with an elastically transformable pawl 27 on both sides. These contact forming members 29 and 29' are respectively located unevenly and fixed so that they are exposed on the superficial and rear sides of the body 28.

Areas 29a and 29'a exposed from each one face of the contact forming members 29 and 29' respectively elastically come in contact with the contact of a circuit board 30 by composing the contact mechanisms 24 and 25 as described above and fitting the circuit board 30 in front of a vertical wall 34 of a base 32, areas 29b and 29'b exposed from the other face respectively elastically come in contact with the contact of a circuit board 31 described later of the ink cartridges 40 and 50, and conduction is acquired.

In the meantime, the print head 5 is fixed to the bottom of the holder 4 via a horizontal part 33 of the base 32 composed together with the ink supply needles 6 and 7 so that the base is approximately L-type. Windows 35 and 36 are respectively formed in areas opposite to the contact mechanism 24 and 25 on the vertical wall 34 of the base 32 and the above circuit board 30 is held on its front side.

The circuit board 30 is connected to control means 38 via a flexible cable 37 shown in FIG. 1, supplies a driving signal for instructing the print head 5 to jet an ink droplet and comes in contact with the circuit board 31 of the ink cartridges 40 and 50 respectively via the contact mechanisms 24 and 25.

FIGS. 6(a) and 6(b) show an embodiment of the black ink cartridge 40 and the color ink cartridge 50, a porous number 42 impregnated with ink is respectively housed in containers 41 and 51 formed so that they are substantially parallel and the respective upper faces are respectively sealed by the covers 43 and 53.

The ink supply ports 44 and 54 are respectively formed in positions opposite to the ink supply needles 6 and 7 when the ink cartridges are respectively installed in the holder 4 at the bottom of the respective containers 41 and 51, and overhang portions 46, 56 and 56 for fitting in the respective projections 14 and 15 of the levers 11 and 12 are integrated with the respective upper ends of the vertical walls 45 and 55 on the side of the ink supply ports. As shown in FIGS. 6(a) and 6(b), the overhang portions 46, 56 protrude from the housing of the ink cartridges 40, 50, respectively, in a direction perpendicular to a plane of the circuit board 31. The overhang portion 46 of the black ink cartridge 40 is continuously formed from one end to the other end, the overhang portion 56 of the color ink cartridge 50 are individually formed so that they are located on both sides and, further, triangular ribs 47 and 57 are respectively formed between each lower surface and the wall 45 or 55. A reference number 59 denotes a concave portion for preventing wrong insertion.

Concave portions 48 and 58 are respectively formed on the vertical walls 45 and 55 on the side of the ink supply ports so that the concave portions are respectively located in the center of the width of the ink cartridges 40 and 50 and

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the circuit boards **31** are respectively installed in the above concave portions.

As best shown in FIGS. **6(a)** and **6(b)**, the circuit boards **31** is attached on a side wall having the shorter width than the other side wall of the ink cartridges **40** and **50** and located on a central line of the ink supply ports **44** and **54**, respectively. The circuit board **31** is disposed substantially in parallel with the side wall. In addition, as shown in FIG. **6(b)**, the ink cartridge **50** is provided with a plurality of ink chambers for different ink, and the circuit board **31** is disposed substantially at a center of the total width of the plurality of the ink chambers. Because the circuit boards **31** are located as described above, the accurate positional relationship of the circuit boards **31** with the contact member of the printing apparatus can be assured when the ink cartridges **40** and **50** are mounted on the printing apparatus.

Further, it is preferable that the height or depth of the concave portions in which the circuit boards **31** are to be installed is higher than that of the circuit board **31**. Alternately, a plane of the circuit boards **31** is aligned with a surface of the side wall of the ink cartridge **40**, **50** on which the circuit boards **31** are disposed. Because of these arrangement, the circuit boards **31** can be prevented from being touched by a user's finger when the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus.

Contacts **60** in plural rows in a direction in which the cartridge is inserted, in two rows in this embodiment, are formed in a position respectively opposite to the contact forming members **29** and **29'** of the above contact mechanism **24** on the side of the surface when the circuit board is attached to the ink cartridge of the circuit board **31** as shown in FIG. **7(a)**. A semiconductor storage means **61** may be mounted at the rear surface of the circuit board **31** so that the semiconductor storage means is connected to these contacts **60** and, if necessary, is molded by ink-resistant material and is kept unexposed. The semiconductor storage means **61** may store data of the quantity of ink housed in the ink cartridge **40** or **50** to which the semiconductor storage means is provided, the manufacturing date of the ink, its trademark and the like. If required, the semiconductor storage means **61** stores data such as a maintenance status transmitted from the body of the printing apparatus. A reference number **60'** denotes an electrode used for a check during its manufacturing process. The electrode **60'** is grounded when used.

As shown in FIG. **7**, the electrodes **60** are distanced from an edge of the circuit board **31** or from a position of the circuit board where a contact member of the printing apparatus first comes into abutment when the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus. Such arrangement is advantageous in that the electrodes **60** on the circuit board **31** can be protected from a damage which might be given to the electrodes **60** when the circuit board **31** comes into abutment with the contact member of the printing apparatus. Further, since the electrodes **60** are distanced from the edge of the circuit board **31**, it is easy to control the position of the circuit board **31** with respect to the contact member of the printing apparatus.

Out of electrodes **60** formed on the circuit board **31**, for a small electrode **60-1** shown in FIG. **7(c)**, the height **H1** may be 1.8 mm and the width **W1** 1 mm, for a large electrode **60-2**, the height **H2** may be 1.8 mm and the width **W2** is 3 mm. Particularly, contact with the contact forming members **29** can be secured by forming the small electrode **60-1** in a rectangle in which the length in the inserted direction of the ink cartridge **40** or **50** is longer than that in the other direction, minimizing the width **W1** of the electrode even if

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there is a lift Δh between the ink cartridge **40** or **50** and the holder **4** as shown in FIG. **11(c)**.

On the circuit board **31** on which the semiconductor storage means **61** is mounted as described above, at least one through hole **31a** and a concave portion **31b** are formed, and projections **45a**, **45b**, **55a** and **55b** for positioning together with the through hole **31a** and the concave portion **31b** and overhangs **45c**, **45d**, **55c** and **55d** which are elastically in contact with the side of the circuit board **31** such as a rib and a pawl are respectively formed near the ink supply ports **44** and **45** in a direction in which the cartridge is inserted in the vertical direction of the circuit board **31** on the vertical walls **45** and **55** which are respectively the mounting faces of the ink cartridges **40** and **50**. In another arrangement, if desired, the circuit board **31** may be provided with at least one projection which engages with a concave portion or through-hole for positioning the circuit board **31** with respect to the ink cartridge.

Hereby, the circuit board can be readily installed, respectively fitting to the ribs **45c**, **45d**, **55c** and **55d** by pressing the semiconductor storage means **61** on the respective walls **45** and **55** of the cartridges **40** and **50**, regulating the position of the semiconductor storage means according to the projection. Hereby, the cartridge is not required to be thickened uselessly for forming a hole for a screw, filling ink of sufficient quantity is enabled, not screwing fastening in which work is relatively troublesome but not riveting in which work is easy can be applied and a manufacturing process can be simplified. The height of the ribs **45c**, **45d**, **55c** and **55d** may preferably be higher than a plane of the circuit board **31** when the circuit board is disposed on the ink cartridge, so that the circuit board **31** may be prevented from touching user's finger when he or she mounts the ink cartridge on the printing apparatus.

In this embodiment, when the cartridge **40** is installed with the lever **11** lifted up to an approximately vertical position, the overhang **46** formed on the side of the ink supply port is caught by the projection **14** of the lever **11**, the side of the other end is supported by the sloped part **13b** of the holder **4** and held in a state in which the side of the ink supply port is lifted as shown in FIG. **8**. In the above installation, if the ink cartridge **40** comes in abutment against the body of the printing apparatus, the circuit board **31** is protected by the overhang portion **46** in the upper part, as the circuit board **31** is also housed in the concave portion **48**, no shock directly operates on the circuit board **31** and damage is prevented.

When the lever **11** is closed in this state, the projection **14** is turned downward, the ink cartridge **40** is lowered, approximately keeping the posture when it is installed and the ink supply port **44** comes in contact with the tip end of the ink supply needle **6** as shown in FIG. **9**. As shown in FIG. **9**, the circuit board **31** is located at an opposite position of a fulcrum of the ink cartridge **40** when it is mounted on or removed from the holder of the printing apparatus. Further, as best shown in FIGS. **6**, **8** and **9**, the circuit board **31**, the ink supply port **44**, **54** and the overhang members **46**, **56** are located at the same side of the ink cartridges **41**, **51**, respectively. Owing to such structure, the positioning of the circuit board **31** with respect to the contact member of the printing apparatus is not largely affected by the quantity of a turn when the ink cartridge **40** is mounted on the holder of the printing apparatus.

As a part over the ink supply port **44** of the cartridge **40** is pressed by the elastic member **20** when the lever **11** is further turned in this state, the ink supply port **44** is pressed

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on the ink supply needle 6 by pressure amplified based upon the ratio of the length of the lever 11 and distance between the shaft 9 and the elastic member 20. When the lever 11 is pressed to the end, it is fixed by the hook 16 with the lever 11 always elastically pressing the cover 43 of the ink cartridge 40 on the side of the ink supply needle via the elastic member 20 as shown in FIG. 3.

Hereby, the ink cartridge 40 is elastically pressed under fixed pressure with the ink supply port 44 fitted to the ink supply needle 6 and a state in which the ink supply port 44 is fitted to the ink supply needle 6, holding them airtight is maintained independent of vibration in printing, shock and vibration due to the movement of a printing apparatus and others.

As the circuit board 31 is located in the center in the width of the cartridge 40 on the vertical wall 45 in the vicinity of the ink supply port, the vertical wall 45 on which the circuit board 31 is fixed is moved possibly in parallel with a locus on which the ink supply port 44 is regulated by the ink supply needle 6.

In the meantime, as the circuit board 31 is located in the vicinity of the ink supply needle 6 even if the cartridge 40 rattles when it is installed and a turn is caused with the ink supply needle 6 in the center, the quantity α of a turn is extremely small as shown in FIG. 10.

For the arrangement set forth above, the circuit board 31 is moved according to a preset path as shown in FIGS. 11(a) to 11(c), comes in contact with the contacts 29 and 29' of the contact mechanism 24 in defined order and in order grouped vertically, prevents data from being lost in the semiconductor storage means 61 due to the application of signals in unprepared order, the contact forming members 29 and 29' elastically come in contact with the contact 60 of the circuit board 31 in a state in which the ink cartridge 40 is securely installed, and the reading of data stored in the semiconductor storage means 61 and the writing of data on the side of the printing apparatus are enabled.

When the installation of the ink cartridge 40 or 50 is finished, the contact forming member 29a of the contact mechanism 24 comes in contact with the electrodes in the upper row out of the electrodes shown in FIGS. 7(d) and 7(e) and the contact forming member 29'a comes in contact with the electrodes in the lower row. Two contact forming members 29 are in contact with the electrode 60-2 arranged in the center in the lower row. The two contact forming members 29 touched to the electrodes 60-2 are grounded and it can be judged by detecting conduction between these on the side of the printing apparatus whether the ink cartridge 40 or 50 is installed or not. Further, as the width W2 of the electrode 60-2 is larger than that of the other electrode 60-1 and the electrode 60-2 is located on the central line of the ink supply port, the electrode 60-2 securely comes in contact with the contact forming member 29'. As the electrodes 60-1 and 60-2 are exposed and a user can check them easily in case the failure of contact is verified, the electrodes are simply wiped by cloth and others and conduction can be recovered. As shown in FIG. 7, the electrode 60-2 is disposed on the same side of the circuit board 31 as the other electrodes 60-1, 61-1 are formed.

When fitting to the hook 16 is released and the lever 11 is turned upward in case ink in the ink cartridge 40 is consumed, the projection 14 of the lever 11 is fitted to the lower part of the overhang portion 46 of the ink cartridge in the process as shown in FIG. 9. When the lever 11 is further turned in this state, the ink cartridge 40 is lifted by the lever 11 and fitting to the ink supply needle 6 is released. As the

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upper half of the ink cartridge 40 is exposed from the holder with the overhang 46 on the side of the ink supply port supported by the projection 14 of the lever 11 as shown in FIG. 8 when the turn of the lever 11 up to an approximately vertical position is finished, the ink cartridge can be easily extracted.

In the above embodiment, only the side of the ink supply port is pressed, however, it is more effective that elastic members 100, 101 are provided in two locations in the longitudinal direction of the lever 11 as shown in FIGS. 12(a) and 12(b) and in the case of the wider cartridge 50 for color ink, elastic members 102 to 105 are provided in four locations, dispersing the elastic members in the direction of the width of the lever 12.

As shown in FIG. 13, when elastic members 106 and 107 in size covering the approximately overall face are mounted, the cartridges 40 and 50 can be more securely held by large frictional force. In this case, it is desirable that thickness and elastic modules are selected so that pressure on the side of the ink supply port is larger than that in the other area.

Further, as shown in FIG. 14, if elastic members 108 and 109 similar to the elastic members elastically pressing the upper surface are laid approximately in the center of the bottom of the holder 4, airtight capability between the ink supply port 44 or 54 and the ink supply needle 6 or 7 of the ink cartridge 40 or 50 can be maintained independent of vibration and shock.

Further, even if at least one plate spring 70 protruded at least on the side of the ink supply port is fixed to the side of a free end at the back of the lever 11 as shown in FIG. 15, the ink cartridge 40 can be fixed in the holder. In this case, it is more effective that non-slip and others are stuck on the side of the free end 70a of the plate spring 70 or on the cover of the ink cartridge.

FIG. 16 shows an embodiment in case a circuit board is arranged at the bottom in the vicinity of an ink supply port or an ink cartridge, an ink supply needle 6 communicating with a print head 5 is planted at the bottom of a carriage and a board 81 on which elastically transformable contacts 80-1, 80-2, . . . 80-6 formed by a spring are formed is provided in a position possibly adjacent to the ink supply needle 6 as shown in FIGS. 17(a) and 17(b).

In the meantime, an ink supply port 14 which can be fitted to the ink supply needle 6 is provided at the bottom of an ink cartridge 40, a concave portion 82 is formed in a position possibly close to the ink supply port 14 and in a position opposite to the contact board 81 and a circuit board 83 is fixed diagonally so that the circuit board has an angle θ with each vertex of the contacts 80-1 to 80-6. It is preferable that the circuit board 83 may be diagonal with respect to a plane perpendicular to a direction in which the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus.

Through holes 83a and 83b for a positioning are formed on the circuit board 83 as shown in FIG. 18(a), semiconductor storage means 84 is mounted on the surface on the side of an ink housing chamber, that is, at the back as shown in FIGS. 18(b) and 18(c) and contacts 85-1, 85-2, . . . 85-6 connected to the data input terminal and the driving power supply terminal of the semiconductor storage means 84 for acquiring conduction to the contacts 80-1 to 80-6 on the side of the carriage, are formed on the side of the exposed surface.

As the semiconductor storage means 84 is mounted at the rear surface of the circuit board 83 as described above, the degree of freedom in arranging the contacts is enhanced. The surface and the rear of the circuit board 83 can be effectively

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utilized and electrodes to be the contacts **85-1**, **85-2**, . . . **85-6** can be formed in area to the extent that the reliability of connection can be secured. A molding agent can be readily applied to the surface on which the semiconductor storage means **84** is formed without considering whether application precision is high or not to prevent from adhering to the contacts **85-1**, **85-2**, . . . **85-6** and the manufacturing process can be simplified.

Further, because the semiconductor storage means **84** is mounted on the cartridge with the status hidden by the circuit board **83**, a user can be prevented from touching to the storage means unintentionally, liquid such as ink can be prevented from adhering to the storage means, and electrostatic destruction and an accident caused by a short circuit can be also prevented.

The semiconductor storage means **84** is connected to control means not shown of the printing apparatus via the contacts **85-1**, **85-2**, . . . **85-6** and the contacts **80-1** to **80-6**, data stored in the semiconductor storage means is read and data such as the quantity of ink consumed by printing operation is written to the means.

In another arrangement, the circuit board **83** may be diagonal with respect to a direction in which the ink cartridge **40** is mounted on the printing apparatus.

In this embodiment, when the ink cartridge **40** reaches the vicinity of the bottom of the carriage in case the ink cartridge **40** is installed, the ink supply needle **6** enters the ink supply port **14** as shown in FIG. **19**, forms a passage, the contacts **80-1** to **80-3** near one side of the circuit board **83** having an angle θ with a horizontal plane first come in contact with the contacts **85-1** to **85-3** and conduction is acquired.

When the cartridge **40** further is further lowered, the contacts **80-4** to **80-6** near the other side of the circuit board **83** come into contact with the contacts **85-4** to **85-6** and all contacts become conduction.

Therefore, power is supplied to the semiconductor storage means **84** through the contacts **80-1** to **80-3** and the contacts **85-1** to **85-3** by which conduction is first acquired so as to initialize the semiconductor storage means **84**. Data can be prevented from being lost by accessing to data stored in the semiconductor storage means **84** via the contacts **80-4** to **80-6** and the contacts **85-4** to **85-6** which become conduction after the above conduction is acquired.

In the meantime, when the ink cartridge **40** is pulled out from the carriage, termination processing can be executed by power still supplied by the contacts **80-1** to **80-3** and the contacts **85-1** to **85-3** and afterward, power can be turned off through the contacts **80-4** to **80-6** and the contacts **85-4** to **85-6** are first disconnected. When processing for the semiconductor storage means **84** finishes as described above, the ink supply needle **6** is pulled out from the ink supply port **14**.

FIG. **20(a)** shows the other embodiment of contacts **85-1** to **85-5** formed in an ink cartridge **40**. Conductive patterns **86** and **87** are formed between a column of contacts **85-1** to **85-3** by which conduction is first acquired when the ink cartridge **40** is inserted and a column of contacts **85-4** to **85-5** by which conduction is afterward acquired.

For example, the contacts **85-1** and **85-3** are selected as a detection terminal and two of the contacts **85-4** to **85-5**, that is, **85-4** and **85-5** may be selected as a power supply terminal.

In the arrangement described above, if ink **K** adheres across the terminals **85-4** and **85-5**, serving as a power supply terminal as shown in FIG. **20(b)**, resistance between the terminals **85-4** and **85-5** is detected by the contacts **85-1**

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and **85-3**, by which conduction is first acquired together with the contacts **80-1** and **80-3** of the holder **4** when the ink cartridge is inserted. If the detected resistance is lower than a predetermined value, the supply of power to **80-4** and **80-5** by which conduction is next acquired together with the power supply terminals **85-4** and **85-5** is stopped and an accident caused by a short circuit due to the adhesion of ink **K** can be precluded.

FIG. **21** shows another preferred embodiment of the present invention in which a circuit board **83'** on which contacts **85-1'** to **85-6'** formed such as to be secured horizontally at the bottom of an ink cartridge **40** while the circuit board is always pressed upward by a spring or the like. A board **81'** on which two columns of contacts **80-1'** to **80-3'** and contacts **80-4'** to **80-6'** are formed is formed in such a manner that difference g in a level is made between the tip ends of the two columns is provided.

Also in this embodiment, as shown in FIG. **22**, as the first column of contacts **85-1'** to **85-3'** and the contacts **80-1'** and **80-3'** first become conduction. Next, the second column of contacts **80-4'** to **80-6'** respectively short in a stroke come in contact with the contacts **85-4'** and **85-6'** and conduction is acquired, so that the similar action and effect to those in the above embodiments are produced.

In the above embodiment, the contacts **80-1** to **80-6** and **85-1** to **85-6** are divided into plural columns and difference in time until conduction is acquired is provided between the columns. However, it is clear that the similar effect may be realized even if the contacts **80-1** to **80-6** and the contacts **85-1** to **85-6** are respectively arranged in one row as shown in FIGS. **23(a)** and **23(b)**, and a board **83** on which the contacts **85-1** to **85-6** are formed is angled as shown in FIGS. **23(c)** and **23(d)** so that the conducting time becomes different between the contact **80-1** and **85-1** on one side and the contact **80-6** and **85-6** on the other side. Similarly, if the position of each end of the contacts **80-1** to **80-6** is designed to be differentiated, so that the same function may be achieved.

In the above embodiments, the mode according to which the ink cartridge is mounted on the carriage is described as an example. However, it is apparent that a similar effect may be obtained even if the present invention is applied to a printing apparatus of a type in which an ink cartridge is housed in a cartridge housing area of the apparatus body and is connected to a print head via an ink supply tube.

That is, contacts have only to be formed in required positions on the exposed face of the ink cartridge and the above contacts **85-1** to **85-6** have only to be formed in touchable positions opposite to the contacts of the ink cartridge when the ink cartridge is installed.

In addition, the same effect may be accomplished even in an arrangement in which the board **83** is mounted at the bottom of the ink cartridge **40** via a mounting plate **88** having elastically transformable pawls **88a** protruding therefrom at least at both ends on the open sides of the mounting plate, after inserting a coil spring **86** or an arcuate plate spring **87** into a concave portion as shown in FIGS. **24** and **25**. Alternatively, the same effect may be obtained if the semiconductor storage means **84** is mounted on the mounting plate **88** thereby to form the contacts **85-1**, **85-2**, . . . **85-6**. According to this arrangement, if merely a jig is prepared, the pawls **88a** can be removed by the jig and the board **83** can be detached from the cartridge **40** in a factory while precluding unnecessary detachment by user.

Further, in the above embodiments, projections for positioning may be formed on the ink cartridge and the circuit

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board is positioned. However, the similar effect can be achieved in another arrangement in which a concave portion 93a is formed on a wall of an ink cartridge 90, a wall 93 adjacent to the bottom 92 on which an ink supply port 91 is formed, in this embodiment as shown in FIG. 26(a), a circuit board 83 is housed and fixed in the concave portion 93a.

If necessary, a film 94 which can be peeled from one end 94a may be also applied as shown in FIG. 26(b) and may be also sealed till the start of use.

According to the present invention, as the ink supply needle is located near one side in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the reciprocation of the carriage, the circuit board is mounted on the wall in the vicinity of the side on which the ink supply port is formed of the ink cartridge, the plural contacts for connecting to external control means are formed on the exposed surface of the circuit board and the semiconductor storage means is accessed from the external control means via the contacts, the circuit board is located on the side of the ink supply port and the face on which the circuit board is fixed is moved along the ink supply needle. Therefore, even if there is play between the carriage and the cartridge, the cartridge is moved according to a locus defined by the ink supply needle and the ink supply port, the contacts are connected to the external control means in a defined order and data stored in the semiconductor storage means can be securely prevented from being lost by the application of signals in an unprepared order.

What is claimed is:

1. An ink cartridge for mounting on a carriage of an inkjet printing apparatus and for supplying ink to a printhead of said ink jet printing apparatus through an ink supply needle, the ink cartridge comprising:

- a plurality of external walls, including a first wall and a second wall, defining at least some of a chamber;
- an ink supply port for receiving said ink supply needle, the ink supply port having a centerline and communicating with the chamber,
- a semiconductor storage device storing information about the ink carried by said cartridge; and
- a plurality of contacts for connecting the semiconductor storage device to the ink jet printing apparatus, the contacts being formed in a plurality of rows lying essentially in a plane parallel to the centerline of the ink supply port, each said row being centered relative to the centerline of said ink supply port.

2. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall of said housing.

3. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall of said housing in the vicinity of said ink supply port.

4. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall which is perpendicular to said first wall of said housing.

5. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are disposed on a substrate which is substantially rectangular, and said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall which is substantially perpendicular to said first wall, and said second wall has a shorter width than the other wall of said housing.

6. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are disposed substantially in parallel with said second wall which is perpendicular to said first wall of said housing.

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7. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are located at an opposite position of a fulcrum of the ink cartridge when it is mounted on or removed from the printing apparatus.

8. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are disposed on a substrate which is substantially rectangular and directs in a vertical orientation.

9. An ink cartridge for mounting on a cartridge of an ink jet printing apparatus and for supplying ink to a printhead of said ink jet printing apparatus through an ink supply needle, the ink cartridge comprising:

- a plurality of external walls defining at least some of a chamber;
- an ink supply port for receiving said ink supply needle, the ink supply port having an exit opening and a centerline and communicating with the chamber;
- a semiconductor storage device storing information about the ink carried by said cartridge; and
- a plurality of contacts for connecting said semiconductor storage device to the ink jet printing apparatus, the contacts being formed in a plurality of rows so that one of said rows is closer to said exit opening of said ink supply port than an other of said rows, the row of said contacts which is closest to said exit opening of said ink supply port being longer than the row of said contacts which is furthest from said exit opening of said ink supply port.

10. The ink cartridge according to claim 9, wherein the electrical contacts are arranged so that at least one contact is spaced apart from the central line of the ink supply port.

11. The ink cartridge according to claim 9, wherein said contacts, viewing the ink cartridge in a direction perpendicular to a plane of the contacts, lie on a centerline of said ink supply port.

12. The ink cartridge according to claim 9, wherein said wall on which said semiconductor storage device is disposed is located in the vicinity of said ink supply port.

13. The ink cartridge according to claim 12, wherein said semiconductor storage device is located on a center line of said wall of said housing on which said semiconductor storage device is disposed.

14. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein, viewing the ink cartridge in a direction perpendicular to a plane of the contacts, the electrical contacts of each row are symmetrically disposed about the centerline of the ink supply port.

15. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein the contact in the first row is narrower than the contact in the second row.

16. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein the ink cartridge comprises a plurality of ink supply ports.

17. An ink cartridge for an ink jet printing apparatus having a printhead which ejects ink droplets onto recording medium, the ink cartridge comprising:

- a housing containing ink therein, said housing having a first wall and a second wall,
- an ink supply port formed on said first wall for directing ink in said housing to the printhead;
- a memory device storing information about the ink disposed on said housing; and
- a plurality of contacts disposed at a predetermined angle relative to a wall plane on a wall of said housing, the contacts allowing electrical communication between the memory device and the ink jet printing apparatus.

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18. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device is disposed on the same wall as said ink supply port is formed.

19. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said semiconductor storage device is intersected by a plane 5 passing through a center line of said ink supply port.

20. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device is disposed substantially at a center in the widthwise direction of said wall in the vicinity of said ink supply port.

21. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device is disposed on a side wall of said housing.

22. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said housing is substantially rectangular, and said wall on which said memory device is disposed is a side wall having a shorter width than the other side wall of said housing.

23. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device is diagonal with respect to a direction in which the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus.

24. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device is diagonal with respect to a plane perpendicular to a direction in which the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus.

25. The ink cartridge according to claim 17, wherein said memory device comprises a storage device and a plurality of terminals which is grouped into at least two groups.

26. The ink cartridge according to claim 25, wherein said memory device comprises a first group of said terminals connect to said storage device and a second group of said terminals connect to contact members of the printing apparatus.

27. The ink cartridge according to claim 25, wherein said two groups of terminals come into contact with the contact members of the printing apparatus at a time interval.

28. A contact forming device formed on an ink cartridge holder, which contacts a memory device storing information of ink contained in an ink cartridge for an ink jet printing apparatus, the contact forming device comprising:

a support member; and

a plurality of elastic contact members formed on said support, each of said contact member contacts a respective terminal of the memory device of the ink cartridge when the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing

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apparatus, at least two of said plurality of contact members contact a single terminal of the memory device when the ink cartridge is mounted.

29. An ink jet printing apparatus, comprising:

a printhead for ejecting ink droplets onto a recording medium;

an ink container having an ink supply port for supplying ink contained therein to said printhead; and

at least one elastic member formed at a predetermined portion of the printing apparatus, said elastic member elastically engaging with said ink container when said ink container is mounted on the printing apparatus.

30. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said ink container comprises a memory device for storing information of ink disposed at a predetermined position of said ink container.

31. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises two separate elastic materials disposed at different positions.

32. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises a single elastic material covering a surface of said ink container substantially entirely.

33. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises at least one elastic material which elastically engages with a bottom surface of said ink container.

34. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises a plate spring.

35. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises a porous member.

36. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member is disposed at a position confronting said ink supply port of said ink container.

37. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic member comprises a first elastic material and a second elastic material disposed at an opposite side of said first elastic material.

38. The printing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said elastic material is disposed on a lever member of an ink container holder.

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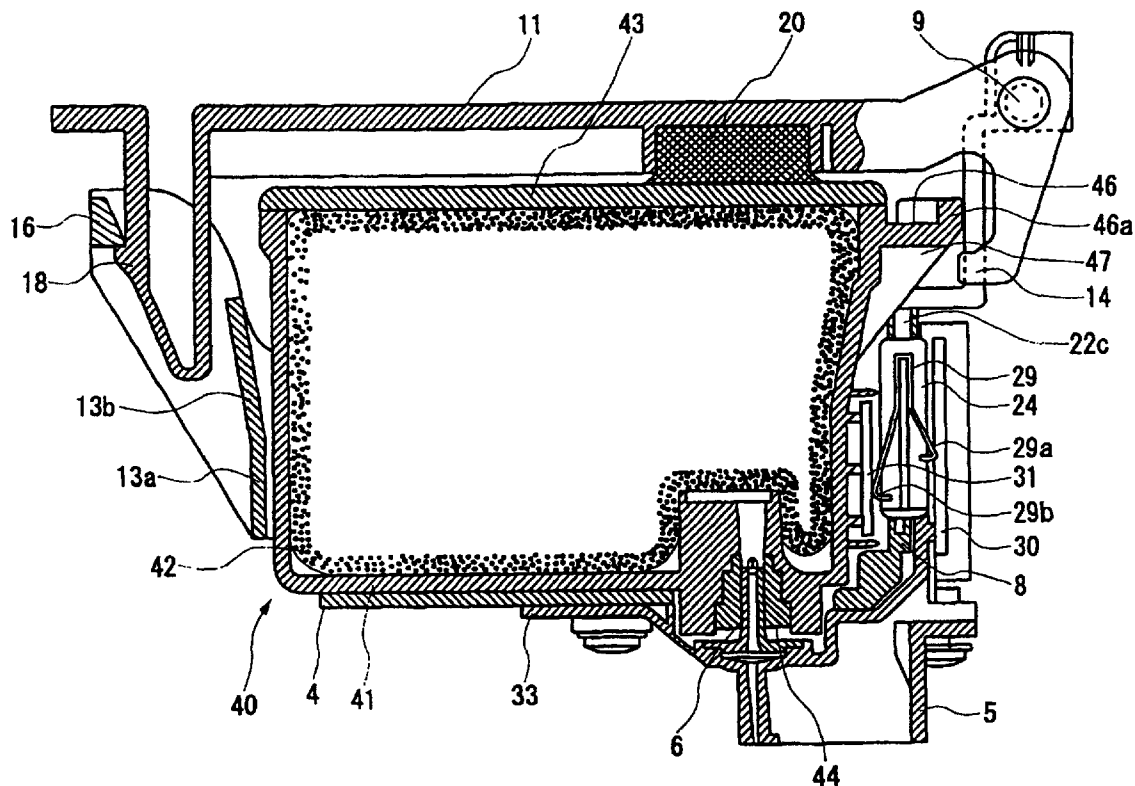
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Primary Examiner—Minh T Nguyen

- (57) **ABSTRACT**

An ink jet type printing apparatus in which an ink supply needle is located near one side in a direction perpendicular to the reciprocated directions of a carriage, a circuit board is mounted on a wall of an ink cartridge in the vicinity of the side on which an ink supply port is formed and plural contacts for connecting to external control means are formed on the exposed surface of the circuit board.



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EX PARTE
REEXAMINATION CERTIFICATE
ISSUED UNDER 35 U.S.C. 307

THE PATENT IS HEREBY AMENDED AS
INDICATED BELOW.

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [] appeared in the patent, but has been deleted and is no longer a part of the patent; matter printed in italics indicates additions made to the patent.

AS A RESULT OF REEXAMINATION, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT:

The patentability of claims 1, 8 is confirmed.

Claims 17–22 are cancelled.

Claims 2–6, 9 and 13 are determined to be patentable as amended.

Claims 10–12, 14 and 16, dependent on an amended claim, are determined to be patentable.

Claims 7, 15 and 23–38 were not reexamined.

2. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall of said [housing] *chamber*.

3. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall of said [housing] *chamber* in the vicinity of said ink supply port.

4. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall which is perpendicular to said first wall of said [housing] *chamber*.

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5. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are disposed on a substrate which is substantially rectangular, and said semiconductor storage device is disposed on said second wall which is substantially perpendicular to said first wall, and said second wall has a shorter width than the other wall of said [housing] *chamber*.

6. The ink cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said contacts connecting said semiconductor storage device are disposed substantially in parallel with said second wall which is perpendicular to said first wall of said [housing] *chamber*.

9. An ink cartridge for mounting on a [cartridge] *carriage* of an ink jet printing apparatus and for supplying ink to a printhead of said ink jet printing apparatus through an ink supply needle, the ink cartridge comprising:

a plurality of external walls defining at least some of a chamber;

an ink supply port for receiving said ink supply needle, the ink supply port having an exit opening and a centerline and communicating with the chamber;

a semiconductor storage device storing information about the ink carried by said cartridge; and

a plurality of contacts for connecting said semiconductor storage device to the ink jet printing apparatus, the contacts being formed in a plurality of rows so that one of said rows is closer to said exit opening of said ink supply port than an other of said rows, the row of said contacts which is closest to said exit opening of said ink supply port being longer than the row of said contacts which is furthest from said exit opening of said ink supply port.

13. The ink cartridge according to claim 12, wherein said semiconductor storage device is located on a center line of said wall of said [housing] *chamber* on which said semiconductor storage device is disposed.

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